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THE CURTAIN RISES

Plays to Produce

A COLLECTION OF NON-ROYALTY
PLAYS WITH COMPLETE PRODUCTION NOTES ON STAGING, DIRECTING, AND ACTING, DESIGNED ESPECIALLY FOR HIGH SCHOOL AND AMATEUR DRAMATIC GROUPS



By

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Preface

IT IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE FOR TEACHERS OF DRAMATIC work in our schools to complain of any lack of opportunity for specialized guidance: between the many courses offered in colleges, universities, and teachers' colleges, on the one hand, and a bewildering variety of books on the other, it seems almost impossible that anyone called upon to direct plays in high schools should be able to avoid learning the essentials of his business.

Yet there is much to be done. I believe (I speak as a layman in matters concerning the educational world) that a relatively large number of teachers are still required to take over dramatic work as a mere adjunct to the *non-serious* courses in many of our high schools, and are given little or no chance to receive proper training; that in some schools such subjects as "Whistling" (this from an official state directory) are given the dignity of official sanction, and "dramatics" either not listed at all, or thrown in with extracurricular activities.

It is clear, then, that in spite of the wide opportunities that exist for those dramatic teachers who can use them, there are many who are unable to do so. These are forced to rely on the printed page.

For a little over twenty years handbooks on production, lighting, costume, and "expression" have streamed from the presses. A very few have managed to survive; most of them are useful only in parts; some, I regret to say, are the work of incompetent and superficial writers.

With more than a hundred such works on the shelves of every well-equipped library, the teacher in search of practical, simple guidance is still often in a quandary. What he needs is no complicated treatise on lighting, no historical compilation on costume, and no theoretical compendium on the directing

theories of Stanislavsky and Reinhardt, but an honest and workable guide to the essentials of the business of producing plays in schools.

The Curtain Rises is one of the few books I know that has grown directly out of the day-to-day labors, the experiments, the trial-and-error processes of the two people who have written it. This is no theoretical or philosophical treatise; it is a summing up of the methods which the writers have proved to be most effective.

Professor and Mrs. Masters are workers in the vineyard: they have acted and directed, devised lights and painted scenery, and they have, by association with teachers and students, faced and solved those problems which every teacher has to solve who cares even a little more about the theater than is required of him.

Their book makes no pretense to cover the entire field of play producing, but it may justly claim the sympathetic attention of any earnest teacher who wants to know how, and is willing to put into practice what the authors have already tested in the classroom.

BARRETT H. CLARK

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Foreword

THOSE VALIANT PEOPLE WHO "PUT ON SHOWS" inspired this book. They and they alone realize what an agonizing and hair-graying business play production can be, yet they realize too that it is one of the most fascinating, one of the most creative, and one of the most human businesses in the world. That high school teacher, that amateur director, that play-minded student — all are turning out play after play. They can do it and do it well. They get the fun and excitement and thrilling satisfaction of watching a play stumble out from under awkward rehearsals on a bare stage to a creditable performance on a stage whose every flat may have been decorated and set up by their own hands. Those are the people this book wants to help — to make that job easier and more enjoyable.

The Curtain Rises has been compiled with a view to providing the high school teacher, the amateur director, and the student interested in play production with material and information for practical use.

Too frequently high school teachers are unexpectedly asked to assume the responsibility of dramatic sponsorship in their schools in addition to their regular teaching load. Their school stage facilities may be limited or composed of the barest necessities in scenery and lighting equipment. They may be hampered by such a scarcity of funds that royalty plays cannot be used. They may be even further deterred by a lack of previous dramatic training which would enable them to take a play and work out for themselves a smooth acting interpretation. Why not simplify for those high school teachers and inexperienced directors the problems with which they are confronted? Let them put on plays and more plays for their enthusiastic audiences with less and less of the usual difficulties and worry.

This book tends to simplify to the greatest degree all those

phases of producing a play which might grow into fatal intricacies for the director. It puts technical problems within solution of those interested students who can work happily with teacher or director in this exciting game of putting on shows.

The production notes give specific instructions on setting and lighting for each play, and for costuming and making up characters for each play. All this has been done with an emphasis on simplification and increased effectiveness. Do not be fooled — ambitious amateurs will not be satisfied with halfway productions.

The acting versions of the plays, which in themselves represent a collection of all types from farce to serious drama, from modern to period selections, are workable from the standpoint of student and teacher alike. An attempt has been made to indicate with clarity all movement, business, and action. *The Curtain Rises* wants to make the job of giving a play a smooth and interesting task, and at the same time add to the knowledge and skill of the group which brings the play into being.

Since these are non-royalty plays, the director is relieved of a portion of the financial restrictions often encountered where budgets are limited or nonexistent. The selection has been made carefully in order that the play types fit the audiences found in the average high school or civic community. At the same time the material is suited to the educational and recreational development of the student participating in acting or in producing the plays.

This book has been designed so that it can be used as a text in college play production classes as well. The plays, in entirety or in part, are practical for class demonstration. The contents can be used as practical material in the production of various types of dramas; at the same time the material is applicable for acting demonstrations in the playing of character roles in styles ranging from comedy to tragedy.

The teacher or director need not feel obligated to observe a rigid reproduction of the suggestions set down here for producing any of the plays. Neither does he need to feel bound to follow the hints on interpretation of the acting versions. If the ideas offered here give rise to a creative spirit in the director or player, the purpose of this book will have been served.

PART I. PRODUCTION NOTES

Suggestions to You, Director

The Director's Staff

Rehearsal Schedule for One-Act Play

How to Set Your Stage

How to Drape Your Stage

How to Build a Cardboard Set

How to Build and Cover Scenery

How to Paint Scenery

How to Light Your Production

How to Costume Your Characters

How to Make Up Your Cast

Suggestions to the Property Crew

Note on Acting Versions

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Suggestions to You, Director

BEFORE SELECTING THE PLAY, CONSIDER THE audience and the occasion of public performance. In casting the play, consider the dependability of the individual before ability, thus safeguarding the morale of the cast.

ROUTINE OF REHEARSAL

Get a vigorous start by a first rehearsal as soon as the cast has been chosen.

Set the hours for rehearsal and be exact in your demand that the cast be prompt.

A great number of short regular rehearsals over a long period of time is better than a few lengthy ones crammed into a short period. The first rehearsal should be a round-table discussion and reading of the play. The following three or four rehearsals should include an intelligent reading of the lines accompanied by the planned movement to set the action.

After the action and business have been set, call for memorization of lines and set a deadline. Insist on a verbatim memorization of lines. Dismiss any member of the cast who has failed to memorize his lines when the deadline arrives.

Have your cast rehearse with hand properties as soon as they begin rehearsing without scripts. Make them use the letter, the money, the sword, or whatever hand prop will be used in performance.

There should be at least a full week of co-ordinating rehearsals — the entire play run through with all lines and action. If rehearsals are long, allow a short intermission or rest period. Arrange special periods for “spot” rehearsals, that is, rehearsals on particular scenes or weak individual characters.

Direct the last rehearsals from the rear of the auditorium.

A minimum of three dress rehearsals complete with all details of lighting, scenery, props, costumes, and make-up should be set. Do not interrupt dress rehearsals. Take notes and give criticisms and corrections to the cast after each act, or better, after the whole play. Strive for performance-like dress rehearsals. Try out the finished product on the cast, not your first audience. You might motivate your cast and crew by inviting a few spectators or critics to witness a dress rehearsal.

Plan the schedule of rehearsals and post it as soon as the cast is chosen. *Adhere* to the schedule.

THE DIRECTOR'S ROLE

See to it that all things listed under "Suggestions to You, Actor" are observed by each player.

Let your cast feel free to try any change in the business of the play, provided it is understood that you will have full decision as to whether or not it will be incorporated into the planned action.

Make no unnecessary change in the movement of the actors after it has once been set.

If you think that you can make more clear a direction concerning the reading of a line or the execution of a bit of movement, do not hesitate to demonstrate.

Instruct your cast from the very first to direct attention to the character speaking, especially in scenes where a large number of characters appear on the stage at once.

Suggest that each member of the cast develop a characteristic expression, walk, stance, laugh, and mannerism suitable to the role he is playing.

Seldom will a cast be enthusiastic and interested in giving a good performance unless *you* manifest a great and guiding interest in the same thing.

THE STAGE PICTURE

Strive always for pictorial balance on the stage. This is obtained by careful placing of furniture and wise grouping of characters. Avoid allowing your actors to stand in a straight

line when three or more characters are on the scene at once. In a group of three or more actors on the stage, let the arrangement be more or less wedge-shaped, with the point away from the audience.

The shortest distance from one point to another should be the path of action unless the movement prescribed definitely by the script suggests a different route.

Be sure that furniture does not block important entrances.

THE STAGE MACHINE

Separate crew rehearsals on scenery and lights are advisable.

Check to see that scenery will not shake if touched or handled during the play. Check sound effects, doorbells, etc., always before each dress rehearsal and performance.

Warn the actors to stay out of the way of the crew during scene changes.

Arrange for absolute quiet backstage.

Quick changes preserve the unity of the play and prevent the audience from growing restless.

THE PERFORMANCE

Determine the time of the intermission between acts, and let it not be long. Indicate the length of intermission time on the program. Have everything so scheduled that your play begins promptly at the time which you set for the performance.

Music before the show and between the acts will further entertain your audience, and, if the proper music is selected, the mood of your play will be better sustained throughout the intermission by actors and audience.

Psychologically it is good to have your cast and crew ready for performance at least five minutes before curtain time. You may want to try this: Assemble your cast on stage, talk to them for a moment, or leave them there alone to contemplate the performance.

Have the audience seated as a compact group. The response will be better.

Permit no one backstage during a performance except those actually engaged in production.

Permit no curtain calls except in the case of an unusual performance; then let the call be taken by the entire cast and staff, not by individuals. Curtain calls *must* be previously rehearsed.

A few seconds of darkness after the house lights have been turned out will prepare the eyes of the audience for the stage picture.

After an intermission there should be some sort of warning so that the audience can regain their seats before the curtain rises.

Welcome friends and relatives backstage *after* the show, not before.

AFTER THE SHOW

If there is to be no other performance, strike the set. See to it that all scenery is properly stored.

Check to see that all properties will be returned immediately with notes of thanks to the lenders.

See that actors and crew leave the stage and dressing rooms neatly cleared.

Suggestions to You, Actor

YOUR part, large or small, is an important one, and your conduct at rehearsal helps determine the success of the play. You will know the rehearsal schedule and adhere to it; you will cause no kind of disturbance at rehearsal for you want to make the play successful, and you will always be ready for your entrance when your cue is given.

REHEARSAL OBJECTIVES

Heed your director. He is helping you to be an effective part of an effective play.

Rehearse your part exactly as vigorously as you intend to perform when the play is given. Perfect preparation for a play banishes any possibility of stage fright. Know your lines so well that they come to you easily and thus allow you to use your mind to direct your body and voice in bringing out the character and feeling of the part.

Help your fellow actor by always giving him the same and correct cue.

Aid your visualization of the character you are playing by finding a picture of a person resembling what you think your character would be like, or by studying some real person with the characteristics and mannerisms you want to acquire for your part.

Remember always that you are a part of a picture when on the stage. You must have a reason for any kind of movement that you make while on the scene. If there is no definite purpose behind a gesture, do not make it, and above all, avoid aimless fidgetings!

For exits and entrances, seem to be coming or going with a purpose. Do not linger unnecessarily.

If you are seating yourself, know that the chair or sofa is there, but do not look to see that it is unless you intend to call attention to the furniture.

In rehearsal remember the kind of costume you will wear, and employ no action which would be disallowed by the costume. Wear a coat rather than a sweater to rehearsal if you expect to wear a coat in the play.

When you converse with another person or group on the stage, seem to face them, not the audience. If you have conversation with only one other actor, do not stand in such a way as to make it necessary for him to face away from the audience in order to speak to you.

Do not constantly face the audience.

Allow the audience to see the expression on your face when you speak unless you are otherwise directed.

Direct the attention of the audience toward the person who is speaking by giving your attention to him or by reacting to his words.

Do not overact, but remember that acting must be somewhat exaggerated in movement, facial expression, and voice to be understood at the back of the auditorium.

Unless there is a reason for you to pause, do not hesitate to begin your line immediately upon your cue. However, there are times when a pause is more expressive than words.

Your voice probably will be more pleasant to the ears of

your audience if you attempt to lower the pitch. Cup your hands around your ears, pull them forward, then listen to the sound of your voice. Vary your rate of speech and your pitch in order to avoid being monotonous.

DRESS REHEARSAL

You should appear and play your part exactly as you will on the night of performance. All details should be complete.

Test your make-up under stage lights before going on.

Be sure your costume fits perfectly. It should be pressed for every dress rehearsal and for the performance.

Have your hair cut no later than one week before the play, men, unless you want your ears to stick out.

Check on your hand props before dress rehearsal begins.

THE PERFORMANCE

Be on hand early enough to allow yourself time in which to get ready comfortably.

Do not reveal your amateurishness by peeking out of the curtains at the audience before the show begins or during intermissions.

Come rested, physically and mentally.

Costumes and make-up belong back of the footlights and there only. You should not mingle with the audience unless you are in street clothes and without stage make-up.

You should tell interested friends and relatives previously that you will see them backstage *after* the show, not before.

Be prepared for the laugh response of the audience on comic lines, and "hold off" your next line until the peak of the laugh response begins to subside. Maintain your character while you wait.

Be careful that you or your shadow are not seen off stage by the audience during the performance.

You should respect the orders of the stage manager and the work of the crew.

Do not receive flowers over the footlights. They should be sent backstage to the actor's dressing room.

AFTER THE SHOW

Receive all criticisms, complimentary or otherwise, graciously.

Get out of your costume and into your street clothes as soon as possible, and remove all make-up. Take care of every item of your costume.

Leave the dressing room in good order.

Do not hang around backstage if the crew is still working.

Turn in play scripts to the director unless they are your personal copies.

The Director's Staff

Assistant director. An experienced person or an advanced dramatic student should be chosen as an assistant to the director. He marks the stage directions and all suggestions for business into the script as the director blocks the action. He conducts rehearsals in the absence of the director, and on the occasions of dress rehearsals and performances calls "places" for the cast. He may also become the prompter.

Stage manager. He is the head of the backstage organization and overseer of all work on scenery, lights, and properties. He works with and is responsible to the director.

Scenery crew. Under the direction and close supervision of the stage manager, this group builds and paints scenery, and is responsible for having the finished setting on the stage by the time of dress rehearsal. This crew works backstage during dress rehearsals and performances to execute any changing or shifting of scenery. They "strike," that is, remove and store, the scenery after the performance.

Light crew. The light crew also works under the direction of the stage manager. Early in the production schedule they should draw up a lighting plot indicating the placement and kind of lighting instruments to be used and the color to be used in each. The crew arranges the instruments, operates the switchboard (also the house lights) from a cue sheet on which all lighting arrangements and cues for changes in the lights are indicated.

Property crew. This crew, working under a head who is responsible to the stage manager, collects and arranges all stage properties, including furniture and decoration, and all hand props carried on by actors. Work is not finished until all props have been returned after the performance. If the properties for a play are numerous, this crew should work backstage during rehearsal and performance.

Costume crew. This crew is responsible for obtaining or making sure that the actors themselves obtain every item of wearing apparel worn on the stage. A good costume crew sees that all garments are remodeled, if necessary, and that all garments are pressed each time they are worn on the stage. They assist with costume changes during the show, and see that costumes are carefully hung up, put away, or returned after the performance and between rehearsals.

Make-up crew. First of all, the make-up crew is responsible for stocking the make-up kit with proper articles and materials. They should see that the make-up is put out for the actors' use for each rehearsal and performance, and that mirrors are conveniently placed. The crew assists the cast with make-ups for dress rehearsals and performances. This crew is also responsible for putting the make-up away in good condition.

Business manager. A good business manager should keep a set of books, taking care of all expenditures and receipts for the entire production. He oversees the publicity, advertising, and house management.

Publicity director. The publicity head, with assistants, is responsible for stories and advertisements in newspapers, for publicity stunts to advertise the show, and for the advertising (if any) on the programs. He should arrange for the printing of tickets, programs, and posters.

Ticket manager. The ticket manager is responsible for the sale and handling of tickets before and on the nights of performances. He should organize a staff for a ticket-selling campaign if possible. He should take care of the box office and the checking up of sales on the nights of the performances.

House manager. The house manager is responsible for obtaining and instructing the ushers, for the distribution of programs, and for the seating arrangement of the audience. He

should check on ventilation, proper heating, etc., on the nights of performances.

Rehearsal Schedule for One-Act Play

First Step. Tryouts held to pick cast. Applications received for crew positions and business staffs.

Second Step. Cast list posted with first rehearsal announcement. Crew positions and business staff announced; first meeting scheduled. Rehearsal schedule posted.

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE FOR _____

<i>Time</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Place</i>
FIRST DAY			
1 ½ hours	Reading of entire play, and informal discussion led by director	Cast, crews, and business staff	Stage
SECOND DAY			
1 ½ hours	Blocking of action for first half of play	Cast	Stage
THIRD DAY			
1 ½ hours	Blocking of action for second half of play	Cast	Stage
FOURTH DAY			
1 ½ hours	Walk through entire play, lines and business (with scripts)	Cast	Stage
FIFTH DAY			
1 ½ hours	Rehearsal of entire play, lines, characterization, business (with scripts)	Cast	Stage
1 hour	Scenery designed and work of scenery crew outlined	Director, stage manager, and crew	Workshop
SIXTH DAY			
1 ½ hours	Line rehearsal (first half of play memorized, no scripts)	Cast (seated)	House
	Line and business rehearsal	Cast	Stage
2 hours	Work on scenery	Stage manager and crew	Workshop

Production Notes

<i>Time</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Place</i>
SEVENTH DAY			
1½ hours	Line rehearsal (second half of play memorized, no scripts)	Cast (seated)	House
	Line and business rehearsal	Cast	Stage
2 hours	Work on scenery	Stage manager and crew	Workshop
1 hour	Publicity work outlined	Director and business staff	
EIGHTH DAY			
1 hour	Co-ordinating rehearsal of entire play, for interpretation, business, characterization, etc. (all hand props or substitutes)	Cast	Stage
2 hours	Work on scenery	Stage manager and crew	Workshop
1 hour	Property list outlined	Director and prop man	
NINTH DAY			
1 hour	Co-ordinating rehearsal	Cast	Stage
1 hour	Spot rehearsals for weak characters and scenes	Director and individuals	Stage
1 hour	Property duties outlined	Stage manager and prop crew	Workshop
2 hours	Work on scenery	Crew	Workshop
TENTH DAY			
1 hour	Co-ordinating rehearsal	Cast (assistant director)	Stage
1 hour	Spot rehearsals	Individuals	Stage
2 hours	Work on scenery	Crew	Workshop
1 hour	Costumes planned	Director, cast, costume crew	Stage
1 hour	Lighting planned	Director and light crew	Stage or workshop
ELEVENTH DAY			
1 hour	Co-ordinating rehearsal	Cast	Stage
1 hour	Spot rehearsals	Individuals	Stage
1-2 hours	Work on scenery, props, costumes, publicity	Various crews	

<i>Time</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Place</i>
TWELFTH DAY			
1 hour	Co-ordinating rehearsal	Cast	Stage
1-2 hours	Crew rehearsal (scenery, lights, props)	Stage manager and director and crews	Stage
1 hour	Business meeting	Business manager and staff	House
1 hour	Check and restock make-up	Make-up crew	Dressing rooms
THIRTEENTH DAY			
1-2 hours	Dress rehearsal Play complete with costumes, scenery, lights, props, and make-up	Cast and all crews	Stage
FOURTEENTH DAY			
1 hour	Dress rehearsal Business meeting	Cast and all crews Business manager and staff	Stage House
FIFTEENTH DAY			
1 hour	Dress rehearsal	Cast and all crews	Stage
SIXTEENTH DAY			

PERFORMANCE

The rehearsal schedule for a three-act play should be planned in the same manner. There should be approximately thirty periods for rehearsal of a full-length play. After the first reading rehearsal of the entire play, work on individual acts should be started. After the first act has been completed up to the co-ordinating rehearsals, work should be started on the second act. After two days on the second act, pick up the first act along with it. The same procedure follows for the third. By the twentieth day, co-ordinating rehearsals should be under way. Allow rest periods in rehearsals for three-act plays.

How to Set Your Stage

"I CAN'T do a thing with that stage!" harassed directors are heard to exclaim after trying vainly to arrange a suitable setting. Often directors have only a bare platform on which

to present their plays. Others may have a stage, but an unequipped one. Then, there are those fortunate dramatic directors who have a good workable stage and perhaps a set of scenery. Whichever of these you chance to be, you will, of course, want to use what you have to the best advantage. You will want to plan on getting new and appropriate settings for each play without a great deal of expense.

If there is only a bare platform with which to work, the director can, by exercising his ingenuity and a will to work, transform it into a practical stage with possibilities for attractive settings. The first and simplest way is to hang drapes, that is, a cyclorama, enclosing acting space. The cyclorama serves as a setting for almost any type of play. Although it lacks the realism of painted flats, the cyclorama is comparatively inexpensive and the task of hanging the curtains is not difficult. Door pieces, window pieces, fireplaces, bookcases, and other set pieces against a cyclorama background can be used for your plays, giving a surprising variety of arrangement. Careful selection and arrangement of the furniture for each play will supply what realism your curtain walls fail to suggest.

Now you may go a step farther and construct a simple setting which will lend itself to a realistic impression of actual walls. A good number of cardboard flats, enough to make up any sort of setting, can be built easily and inexpensively. These flats can be made full size and used as regular scenery, or they may be constructed shorter than ordinary height and used against a cyclorama. Short or cut-down scenery used with a curtain background provides a fitting setting for action.

Cardboard flats are easy to construct, easy to work with, can be painted and repainted, and will last for at least a season if carefully handled. You may prefer the cardboard scenery to a cyclorama, but it is wise to invest first in the cyclorama, adding the cardboard pieces as you need them.

If you have even a small budget, you can equip your bare platform with a set of good scenery which can be used over and over again. This one set will enable you to design various arrangements, suitable and attractive, for any plays you may choose to produce. Building a set of scenery is not the impossible task it first seems to be, and your initial outlay is

worth it when you consider that now you have a foundation set to be used for all plays to come.

You already have a set of scenery, you say, but it is rather dilapidated, and has remained the same color for years. Paint will do wonders for old scenery. Careful planning on designs for different arrangements of these old flats for each new play will take away the contemptuous sigh of an audience that remembers the last play when the walls were the same color and the doors and windows were in the same position as they had been for all previous plays.

How to Drape Your Stage

IF IT IS entirely out of the reach of your budget to purchase a cyclorama from a stage equipment company, you can make your own draperies.

Determine the size of the area which you wish to enclose on the stage. The finished cyclorama should be in not less than three pieces, each gathered or pleated to one and one-fourth to one and one-half fullness. More sections of cyclorama provide more openings, and when hung, if the openings are not purposely parted, they are not discernible. The best materials for draped stages are monk's cloth, rep, cotton velour, burlap, or a good quality of sateen. In most cases it will be best to use a cloth which has a rough surface. Fine finishes reflect too much light. The material should be heavy enough to prevent backstage lights from shining through, or drafts from blowing it about. Neutral colors are the most useful. Black and gray are generally effective.

After the material has been seamed together vertically in as many sections as you plan to have, gather or pleat the top and reinforce it with webbing or a heavy strip of material two to four inches wide. In this reinforced edge will go the grommets or rings by which the draperies will be hung. The bottom of the cyclorama should have a hem wide enough to hold weights of some sort. A chain, a length of pipe, shot bags, or metal slugs can be used for weighting. Such weights should be sewn in at regular intervals along the hemline.

Narrow but heavy cord, cut into short lengths, passes through the rings in the top of the material and then is tied around a pipe or wood batten which encircles three sides of the stage. You may use a U-shaped wood or metal frame, or the rings in the top of the "cyc" may be slipped over a wire which surrounds the back and sides of the stage. Battens, rigid lengths of wood or iron, are best because they are movable. The cyclorama is commonly hung on three one-inch by four-inch wood battens, single or double, depending on the weight of the material used. A long batten supports the material at the rear, and two shorter ones, the "cyc arms," pivoted to its ends, carry the draperies downstage, angling slightly off on each side. To mask off at the front edges, two "legs" or narrow lengths of material may be hung in front of the edges of the cyc, parallel to the proscenium.

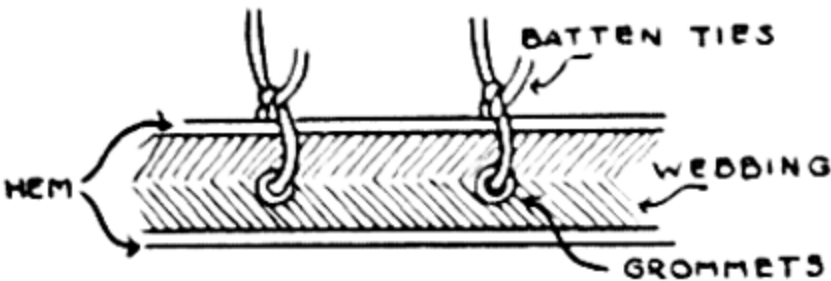
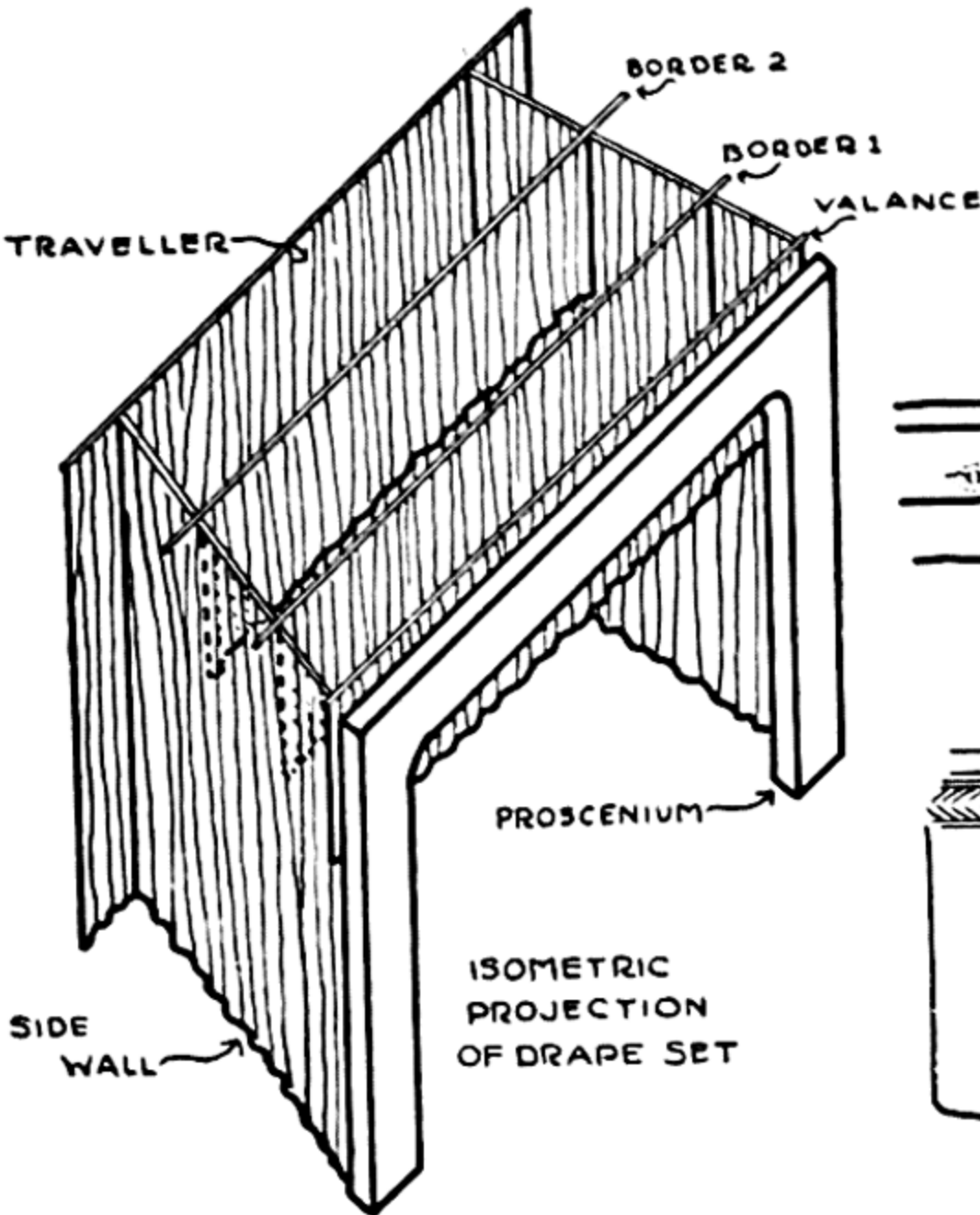
In order to mask or hide the ceiling, narrow strips of the drapery can be cut into abbreviated lengths, called borders, and hung, in the same manner in which the cyc is hung, on narrow battens or wires running across from cyc arm to cyc arm. The length of the borders and the number needed will depend on the sight lines from the auditorium.

How to Build a Cardboard Set

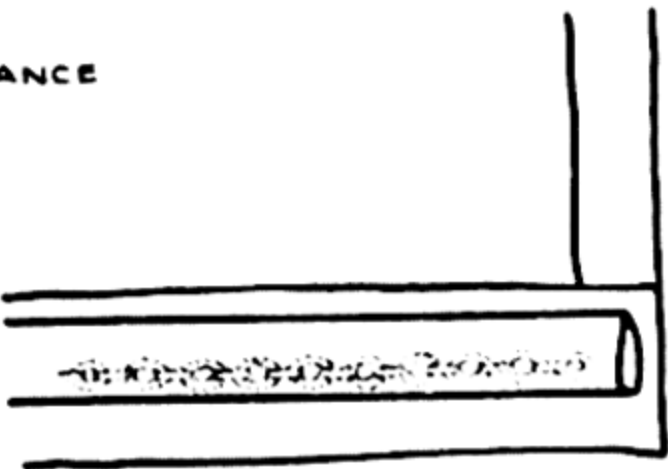
SHEETS of ordinary corrugated cardboard and strips of light wood for framework are the simple materials necessary to construct a good workable set of cardboard scenery. Such scenery is fairly durable, quite realistic, and far less expensive than regular cloth-covered flats.

A full-sized set of cardboard scenery may be made, although it is difficult to get sheets of cardboard large enough to make a full-sized flat. You probably will want to make short or cut-down scenery, which is very effective against a cyclorama. Cut-down scenery is designed to create the illusion of full-sized scenery. It is of such a height as to provide always a background for the actor; you must be sure that it is tall enough to prevent the actor from appearing above the top line of the

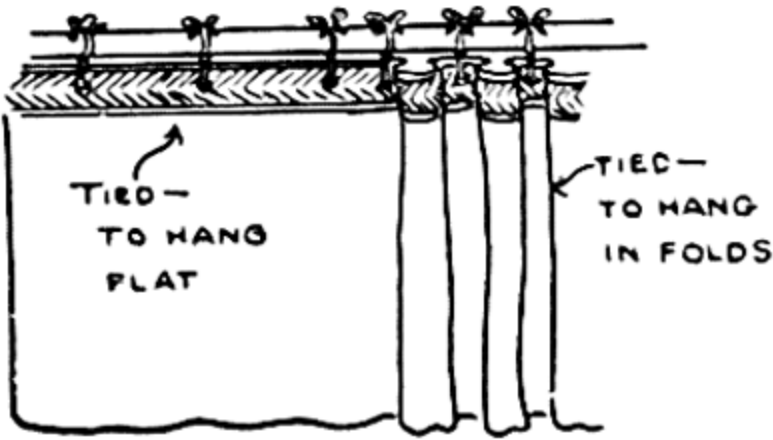
DRAPE



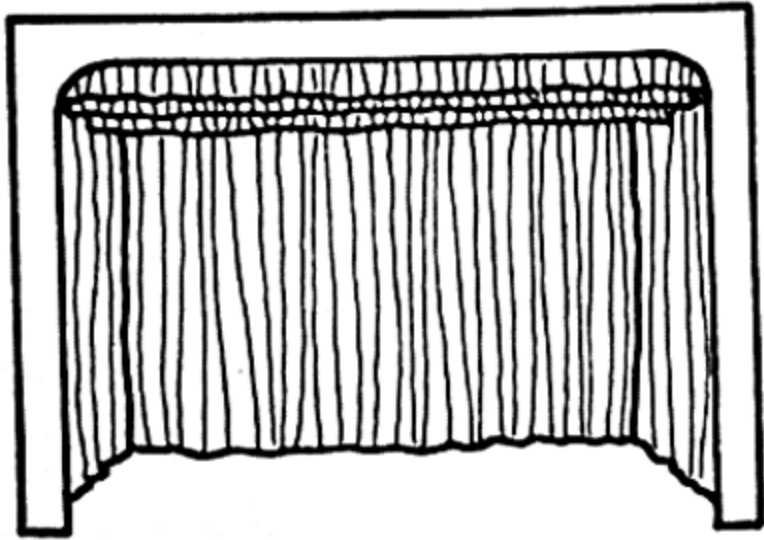
DETAIL—TOP HEM OF DRAPE



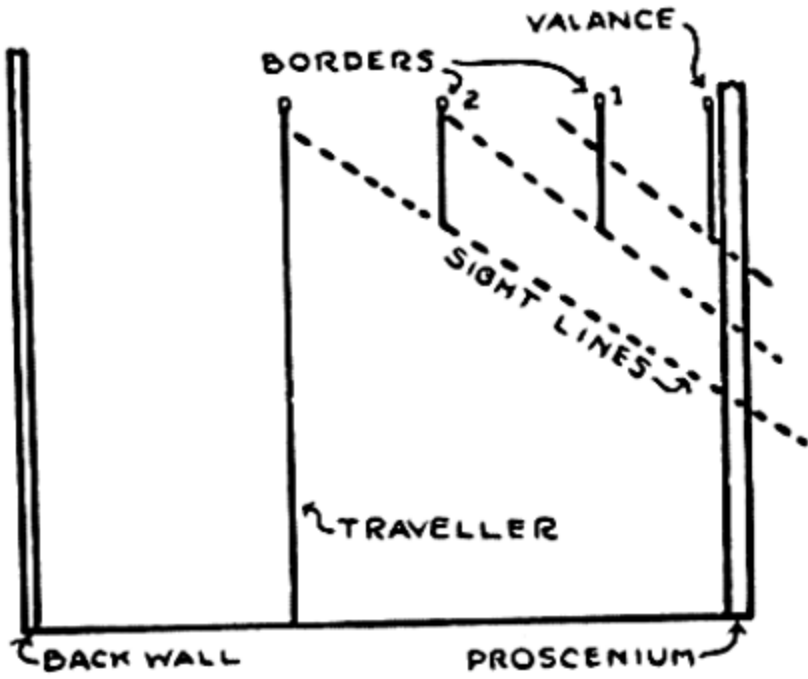
DETAIL—BOTTOM HEM
CHAIN IN CHAIN DAO
3" FROM DRAPE BOTTOM



FRONT VIEW



CROSS SECTION



scenery. Since the attention of the audience seldom rises above the head of the actor, this type of scenery adequately covers the characters of the play. Cut-down scenery is so inexpensive and so easily constructed that it is possible to build a new set for each play if you so desire, and it will be strong enough to use a number of times.

The first step in the construction of cardboard scenery, cut-down or full-sized, is the building of the framework. Each frame should consist of five pieces of narrow wood (three-quarter inch by two-inch white pine is best), making up the side pieces (stiles), the top rail, the bottom rail, and the middle or "toggle"-rail. The frame is constructed in the same manner as for cloth-covered flats.

The corrugated cardboard has enough rigidity to give strength to the framework, and the surface takes paint well. It can be repainted for different plays. The cardboard is obtainable in sheets as large as four by eight feet. It is best to build the frame to fit the size of cardboard that you get, although if you wish to make the flat larger than the size of the cardboard, you can piece it together, covering the joints with paper strips.

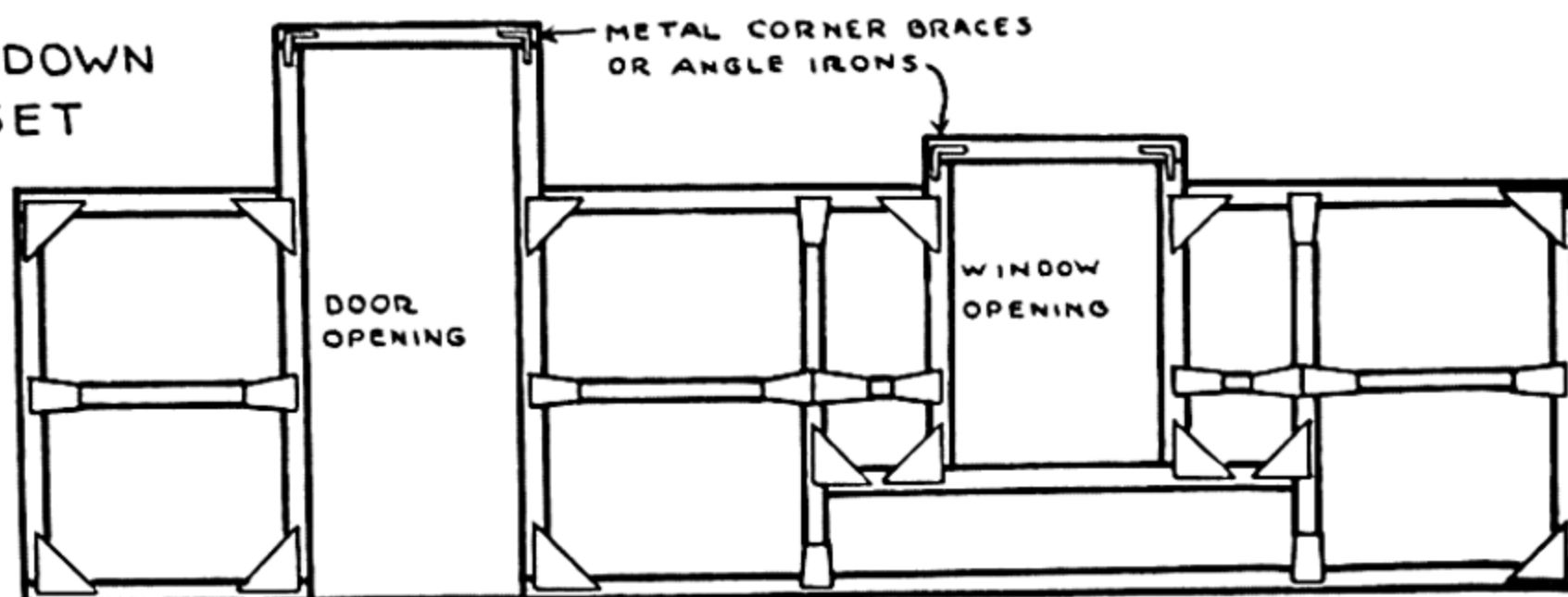
When the frame has been completed, and you have checked to see that it is squared at the corners, fasten the cardboard to it with large-headed carpet or poster tacks. If any of the cardboard protrudes over the edge of the frame, trim it off with a keen-edged knife.

If the flat is to form part of a continuous wall, as it likely will do, it is set up and fastened to an adjacent flat by lashing together (see page 23 for lashing regular flats). Cardboard flats, tightly lashed, will support themselves, and will need no bracing to the floor, unless at a door flat where there is a great deal of strain.

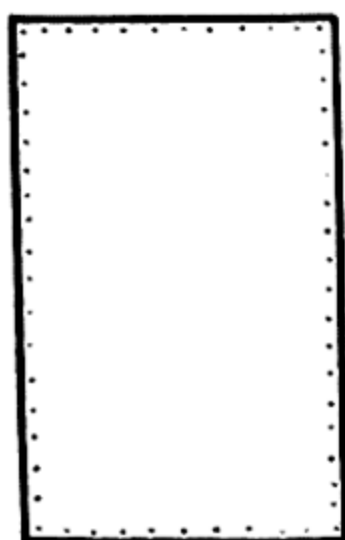
It is a good idea to build several jogs or half-width flats, which can be used to change the shape of a set by making alcoves or insets, and to finish out spaces where a full-sized flat would not fit.

- If any cracks appear between the cardboard flats after they are set up and lashed together, carefully conceal these cracks by paper strips. Ordinary newspaper strips, cut along the

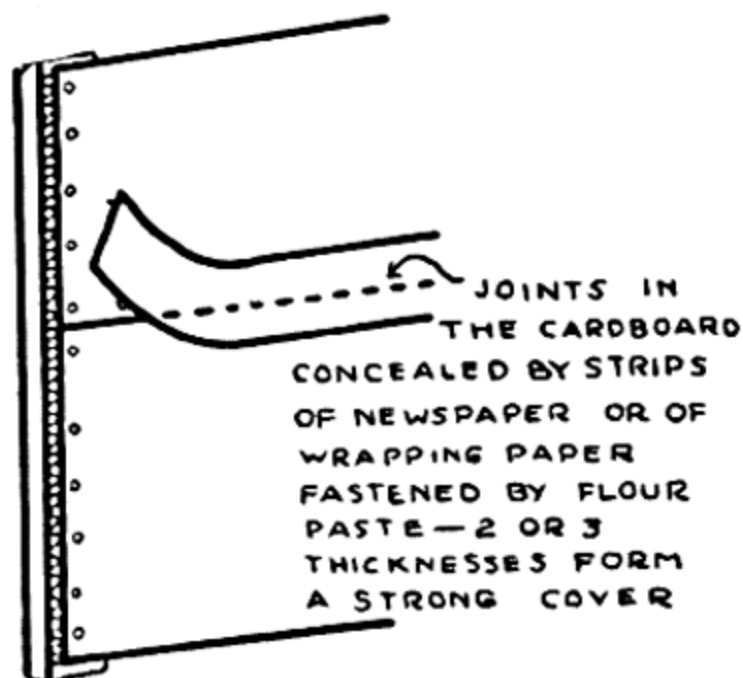
CUT DOWN
SET



BACK VIEW — WALLS MADE IN ONE PIECE — JOINTS REINFORCED BY CORNER BLOCKS AND KEYSTONES — FLATS CAN ALSO BE MADE SEPARATELY AND LASHED TOGETHER

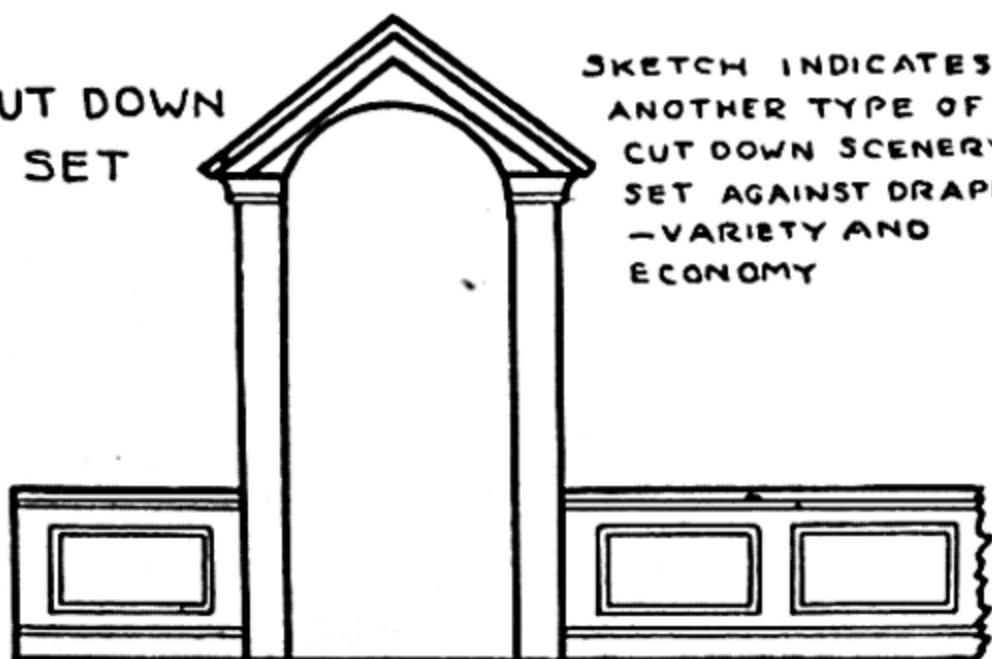


CARDBOARD TACKED TO FACE OF FRAME BY LARGE ROOFING TACKS

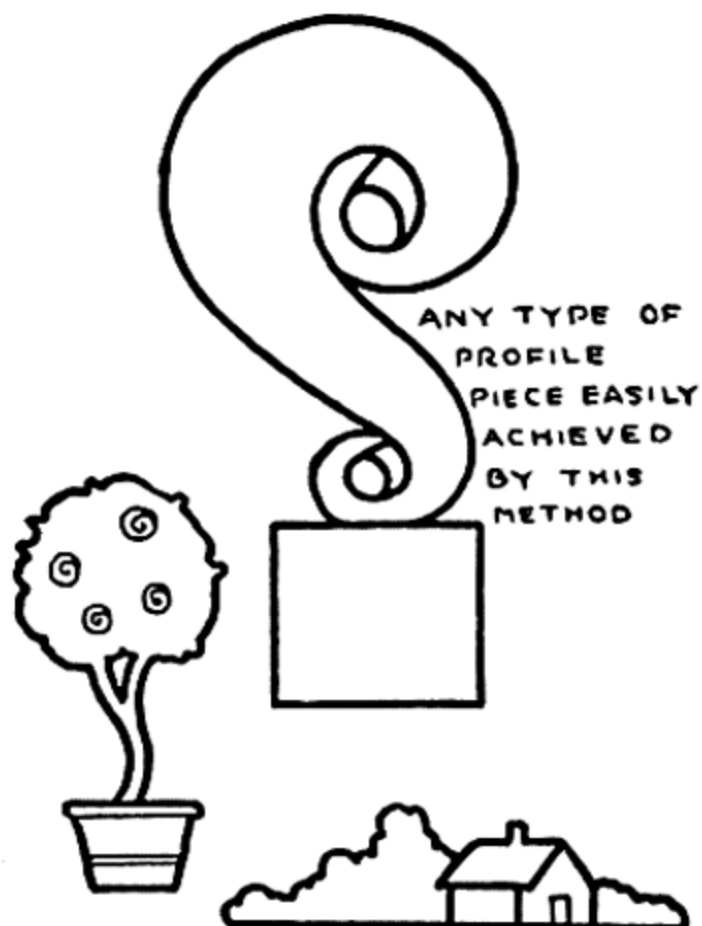


CARDBOARD SCENERY

CUT DOWN
SET



SKETCH INDICATES ANOTHER TYPE OF CUT DOWN SCENERY SET AGAINST DRAPES — VARIETY AND ECONOMY



column lines, may be pasted over the cracks in one thickness or several thicknesses, and painted to match the flats. Use flour paste, as glue will show through when painted over.

For windows and doors, cut out the desired size of opening in a cardboard flat which has been made without the middle or toggle-rail. Window openings must be reinforced around the edge with narrow strips of wood. These wood strips are tacked on securely, and the edges of the opening finished by pasting the newspaper strips over the cardboard edges and wood strips. For added realism, narrow strips of cardboard can be cut and tacked or pasted around the opening on the back of the flat to give the window opening an appearance of thickness or of possessing a casing.

Door openings are made in a like manner. The door itself, which is usually hinged to the opening at the upstage side, is constructed like a small flat, having its own framework in order to make it more practical.

Any one of these cardboard flats can be used separately or in units as set pieces against a cyclorama. Try a cardboard door flat or window flat set in your cyclorama-draped stage, and note the touch of realism it adds.

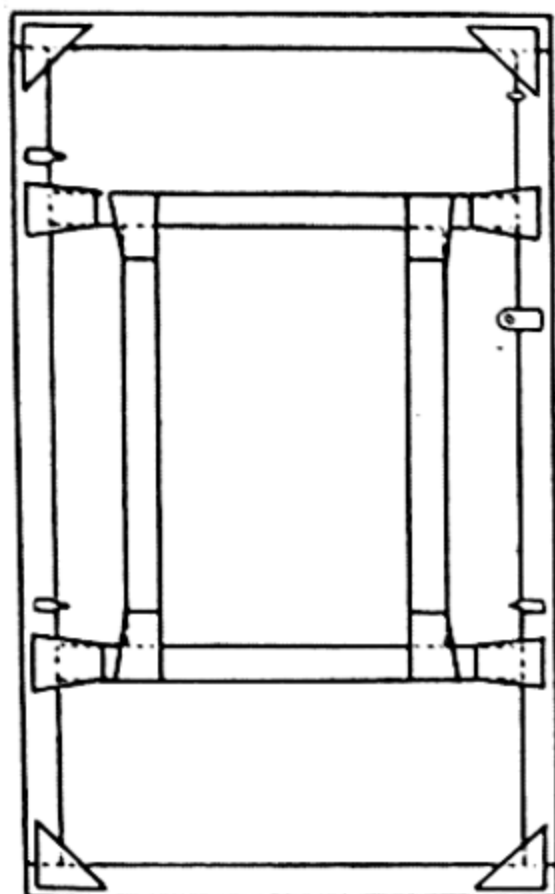
Paint and repaint these flats as many times as you like. If handled carefully, or re-covered from show to show, a cardboard set will allow you to have variety and a seemingly new and different-looking set for every play.

How to Build and Cover Scenery

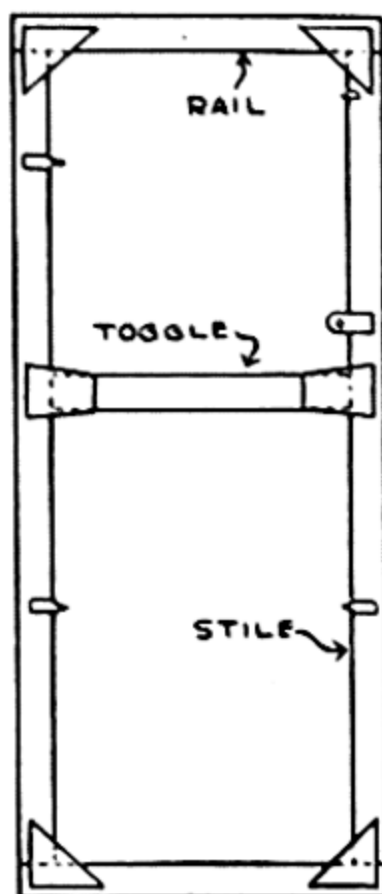
THE greater number of schools and dramatic groups cannot possibly afford to buy a set of stage scenery. Yet this does not mean that you cannot possess a good set of regular flats. Build for yourself a set of scenery. You can do it within a very reasonable budget, and the construction will provide an interesting activity for students or players, giving them an experience and knowledge which they could gain in no other way.

An adjustable box set of seven or more covered flats, which can be painted and repainted, redecorated, and interchanged

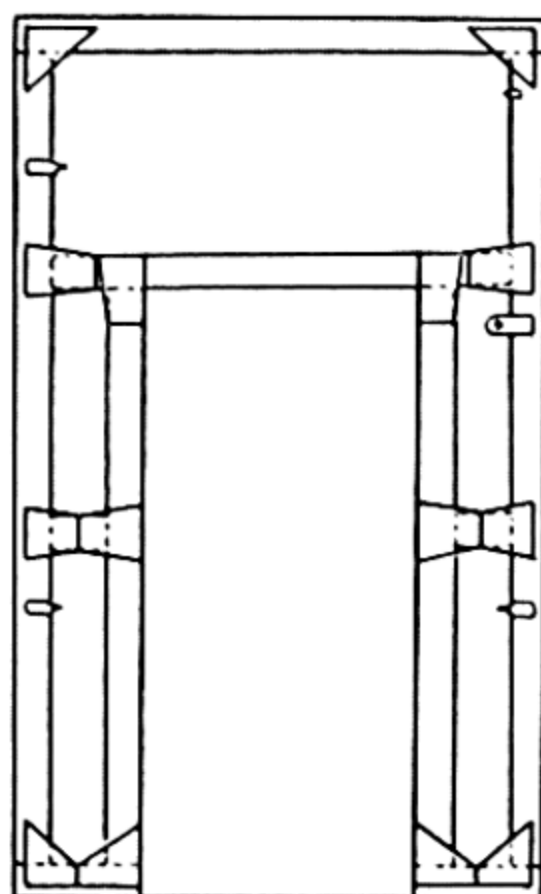
WINDOW FLAT



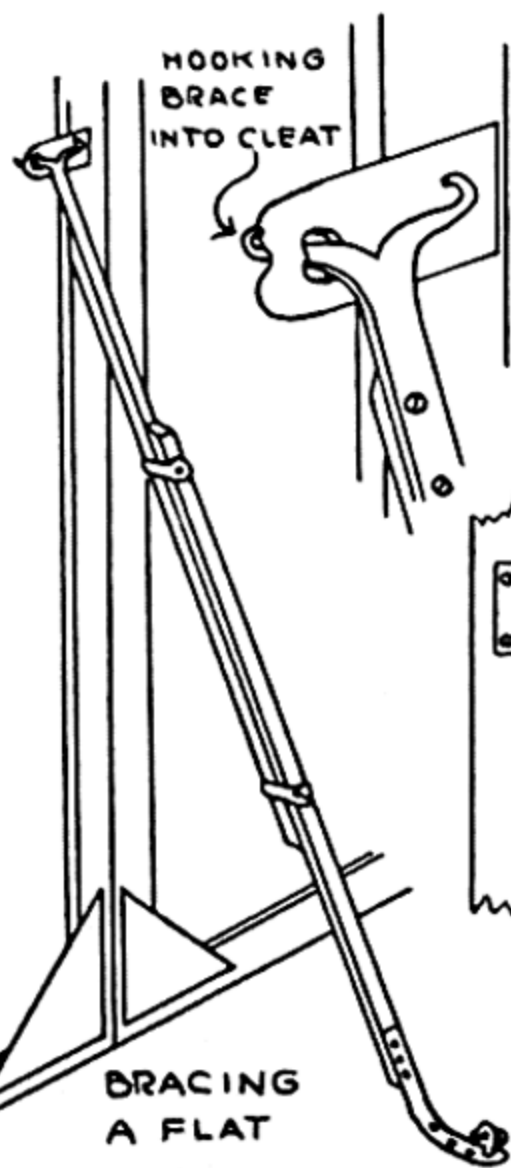
FLAT



DOOR FLAT



HOOKING
BRACE
INTO CLEAT

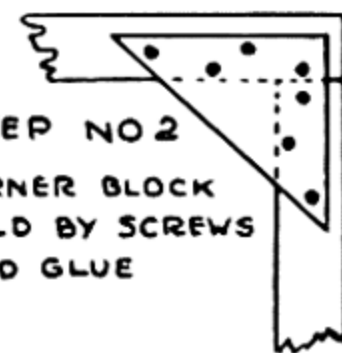


STEP NO1
CORNER HELD
TOGETHER WITH
CORRUGATED
FASTENERS

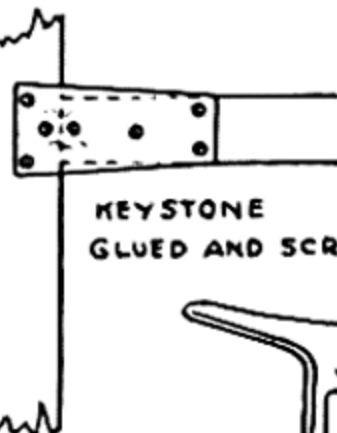


STEP NO2
CORNER BLOCK
HELD BY SCREWS
AND GLUE

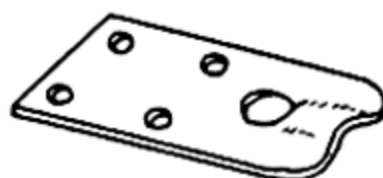
STRAP IRON SCREWED TO
BOTTOM OF RAIL



KEYSTONE
GLUED AND SCREWED



BRACE CLEAT



LASH CLEAT



LASH-LINE EYE



LASHING
AND
TIE-OFF

TIE-OFF CLEAT



DETAIL of
FLAT
CONSTRUCTION

in a number of ways, will solve your setting problem for years to come. The box set affords a facility of arrangement and gives a realistic background for your play.

The size of the flats to be constructed will depend upon the size of your stage. Twelve to fourteen feet is the standard height, but if your stage is small, eight or ten feet is sufficient for the height of your flats. The construction of the flats is the same, regardless of height, but you must decide on a uniform size before you begin. The width of the flats may be from four feet to five feet nine inches.

After you have decided upon the size of your flats, figure upon the number of plain flats, door flats, and window flats you should have in order to make up a workable set. You will need at least four or five plain flats, two door flats, two window flats, and two or four jogs (in one-third and one-half width sizes). With this number you can vary your interior sets to great advantage.

Get from your local lumber dealer lengths of three- by one-inch number one white pine. The lengths of wood should be straight, well seasoned, and free from knots. Get three-eighths inch plywood for keystones and corner blocks to brace the frame. You will find that such wood materials are not expensive.

Each plain flat and jog will have two side pieces, the stiles, and three cross pieces — the top rail, the toggle-rail, and the bottom rail. Lay out the four pieces in a rectangular form. Let the top and bottom rails sit on the ends of the stiles. Check the corners for true right angles. Join the pieces by driving in two or three corrugated fasteners at each corner. Reinforce each joint with corner blocks of wood or angle irons. Place the toggle-rail next, and reinforce with keystone blocks of wood. Always square the frame before reinforcing.

To make a door flat, construct the sides and top rails as in a plain flat, except that the toggle-rail is moved up to form the top of the door frame. Two strips of wood extend down from this raised toggle-rail to form the sides of the door opening, and these are braced to the stiles by short pieces of wood midway of the frame. Instead of a bottom rail running completely across, the opening is left clear, or better still, instead of a

bottom rail, use a thin, flat strip of iron (a saddle iron). Window flats are constructed exactly as plain flats, with the toggle-rail used as the top of the frame for the window opening. The sides of the window opening frame are connected with the stiles by short wood strips.

Now you are ready for the hardware. For each flat you will need one lash eye or screw eye through which the lashline rope will be tied, three or four lash cleats (depending upon the height of the flat), and one brace cleat. The lash eye should be placed from six to ten inches down from the top rail on the inside of the right stile. Then, beginning on the left stile, about two feet down, place a lash cleat, then another, and perhaps another, down to within two feet and six inches from the bottom rail. Place lash cleats on the right stile at like intervals, alternating in position with those on the left, except for the bottom cleat, which will be two feet and six inches from the bottom rail. Thus, when the flats stand adjacent, the lash cleats will alternate until the bottom cleats are reached, where the adjacent ones serve as the tie-off point. The brace cleat, through which the stage brace will be hooked in supporting the flat, should be placed on the left stile, from one to two feet above the toggle-rail.

The lashline is attached by knotting one end of a strip of three-eighths inch sash cord and pulling the cord through the lash eye where the knot holds it secure. The lashline should be six inches shorter than the height of the scenery. When the flats are lashed together, the lashline is drawn snugly around the lash cleat on one stile, then down and around the alternating cleat on the adjoining stile, then back to the first flat and so on, staggering down to the adjacent cleats. Here the line is drawn tightly and tied off. The tie-off knot is made by passing the rope around the two cleats, slipping the end of the rope back over the line where it passes under the first tie-off cleat, then pulling the doubled end through the crossover with a half bowknot. The simple knot is used so that when the free end of the rope is pulled, the knot immediately falls apart; thus, speed and ease in unlashings flats are insured.

If you are unable to purchase regular stage hardware for the flats, you can use metal eyelets, screw eyes, or rings for lash

eyes; and any straight or slightly curved piece of metal which can be fastened to the stile and allowed to protrude can be used for lash cleats. Nails are a bad substitute for lash cleats.

For further bracing of scenery, one may, of course, simply use a narrow board propped against the flat, nailed at one end to the toggle or stile and at the other end to the floor. This is not advisable, for regular braces can be built if you cannot afford to buy them. The sliding or extension brace is best. This is made by overlapping two lengths of narrow wood with iron clamps which can be loosened and tightened, so permitting the wood strips to be lengthened or shortened. In one end is an iron or metal piece, a "heel," which has a hole in it. Through this hole a stage screw can be placed, fastening the brace to the floor. The other end of the brace, equipped with a double-pronged iron hook, is slipped into the brace cleat on the stile. Thus the flat is securely braced.

After the frame for the flat has been built and the hardware attached, you are ready for the covering. Indian head or heavy unbleached muslin can be used quite satisfactorily instead of the usual canvas. Unbleached muslin is inexpensive and very practical for covering flats. You can obtain it in seventy-two inch or eighty-one inch widths. Any scraps can be used later for patching.

Stretch the material comparatively tight over the frame and tack it temporarily at each corner. It is best to have two people working at the covering of a flat. Now begin tacking it in place by drawing it smooth and placing tacks on the inner edge of the stiles and top and bottom rails. Do not drive the tacks all the way in, as they will be removed later. If the material is thus tacked into place on the frame with the tacks from one to two inches apart, the flat covering will be smooth and straight. Turn back the edges of the material which lie untacked on the stiles and two rails. Apply glue to the frame edges, draw the muslin over it and press it down, smoothing out wrinkles. It is best to use ground glue for this process because it is lasting and will not dissolve under painting or washing. One pound of ground or flake glue dissolved in one half gallon of water should be cooked until it reaches a gummy consistency. Do not cook the glue over a direct flame. Set your

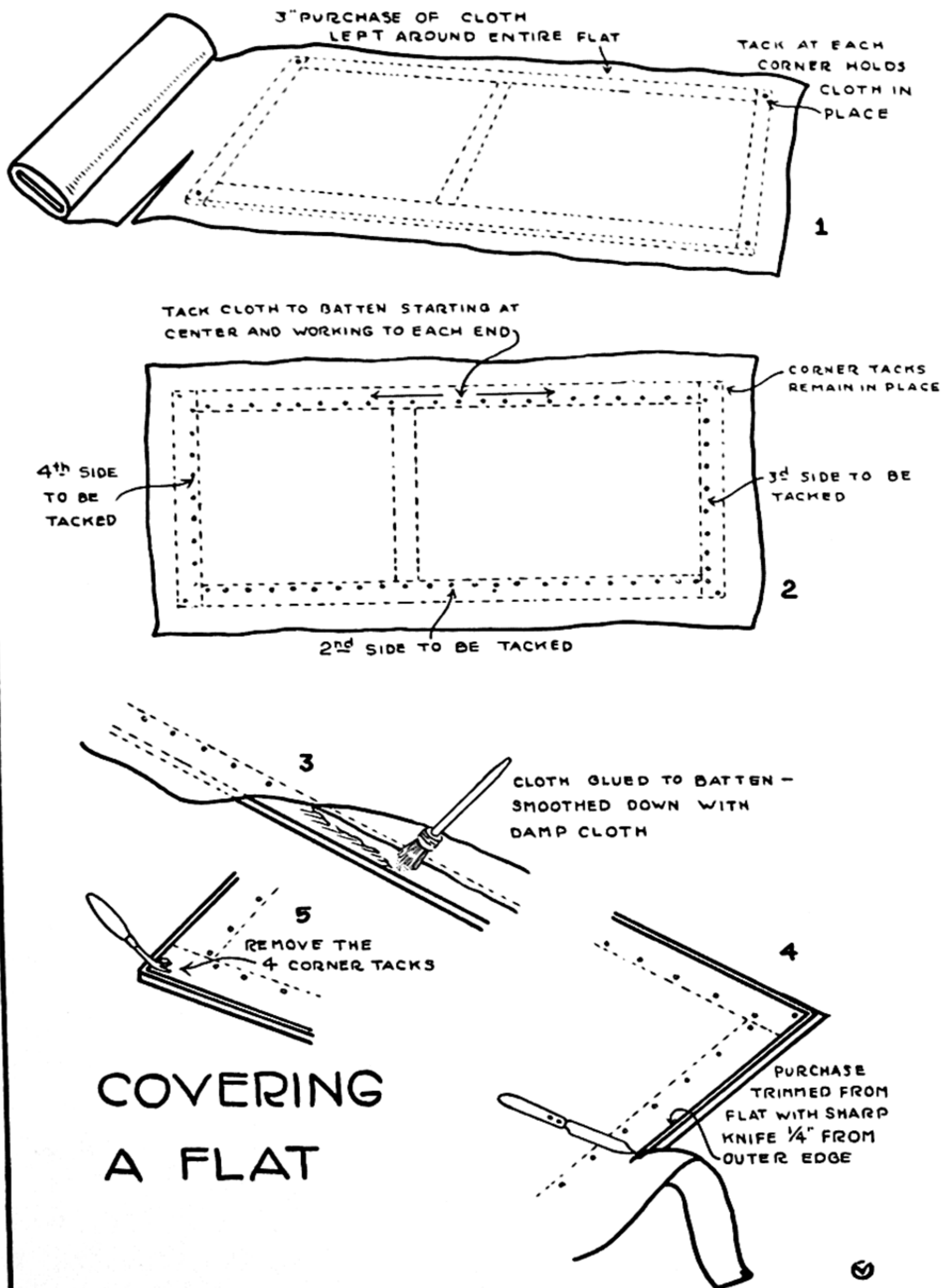


PLATE IV

glue pail in a container of water, using the double boiler method. If you add a pound of whiting to the glue mixture, it will not stain through the material.

When the glued muslin has dried thoroughly, pull out the temporary tacks. If there is any material extending over the outside edge of the frame, trim it off with a sharp knife. Be sure that you have not glued the muslin across the toggle-rail.

Door flats and window flats are covered in the same manner. The muslin is glued around the edge of the frame and the edge of the opening, then the material over the opening is cut out. The covered flats are now ready for sizing and painting.

How to Paint Scenery

MUSLIN-COVERED flats can be given the tightness and durability of a canvas-covered flat by the application of a size coat. This size coat not only gives them a drum-like tightness, but also gives a smooth surface for the paint coat. It closes the mesh of the material and covers the glue at the edge of the muslin.

For glue-size mixture, dissolve one half pound of flake glue in a gallon of water and cook it. Set your container of glue in a pail of water when it is cooking. If you add a pound of whiting to the mixture it will serve better as a covering and prime coat for your flats. Mix and cook enough to last through the entire job of sizing. You may want to simplify the process by buying boxes of ordinary wall size, which you can get cheaply at any paint store. This prepared size needs only to be mixed with cold water to be ready for application. If your mixture of glue sizing or prepared sizing seems thick, dilute it with cold water until it is the consistency of thin cream.

The size mixture should be applied to the flats with a wide brush. Move with long, sweeping, even strokes, covering as quickly as possible the entire surface. It is well to put this size coat on both sides of the flat. In addition to giving a good surface, it flame-proofs the flat, and the coat on the back prevents light from shining through. After the size coat has been

applied, allow the flats to dry thoroughly before painting. Now you are ready for the base color.

The most practical, most easily prepared, and most inexpensive scene paint is ordinary cold-water powder paint or calcimine. You can obtain it in bulk or in five-pound packages. Almost any color is available, but you may mix the powder pigments of various colors to get any desired shade. This powder paint should be mixed with a little of the glue solution and some whiting. The glue makes the paint adhere to the surface, and the whiting gives it body and prevents the color from drying out too light. It is impossible to give exact proportions for glue and whiting in scene paint mixture. The scene painter must learn to judge by the "feel" of the paint mixture, which should be the consistency of rich cream. However, here is an *approximate* proportion, to be used as a foundation from which to work. For six pounds of pigment, approximately one pound of flake glue melted in five quarts of boiling water should be used. This can then be thinned by adding some of the glue solution (one pound of flake glue to five quarts of water), or thickened by the addition of pigment. Do not get it too thin or it will not cover. Do not get it too thick or it will not spread evenly. The amount of whiting depends upon the shade of the color pigment. One pound of whiting to five pounds of color pigment is the general proportion, with additional whiting to be added if the color pigment is to be further dulled.

No set formula for mixing paint can be given, but the general directions call for one pound of pigment to each quart of water, or one pound of pigment to each quart of size solution. You can figure that four pounds of colored calcimine, one pound of whiting, one half-pound of glue, and one gallon of water will give you a paint mixture of the desired consistency.

Be sure to mix enough paint to cover all the flats. Very seldom will two batches of paint, mixed at different times, produce exactly the same shade or consistency. A calcimine paint mixture gradually thickens after it is exposed to air, and you may have to thin it a little as your painting progresses.

Apply the paint to the flat with broad, swift strokes, painting always in the same direction. Lay the flats on the floor or on

carpenter's horses, and paint rapidly across them. Be sure that all edges of the flats are painted. Remember this: do not be slowly exact with scenery painting. This is to be looked at from a distance. Only the big things show. Work broadly and don't be fussily careful.

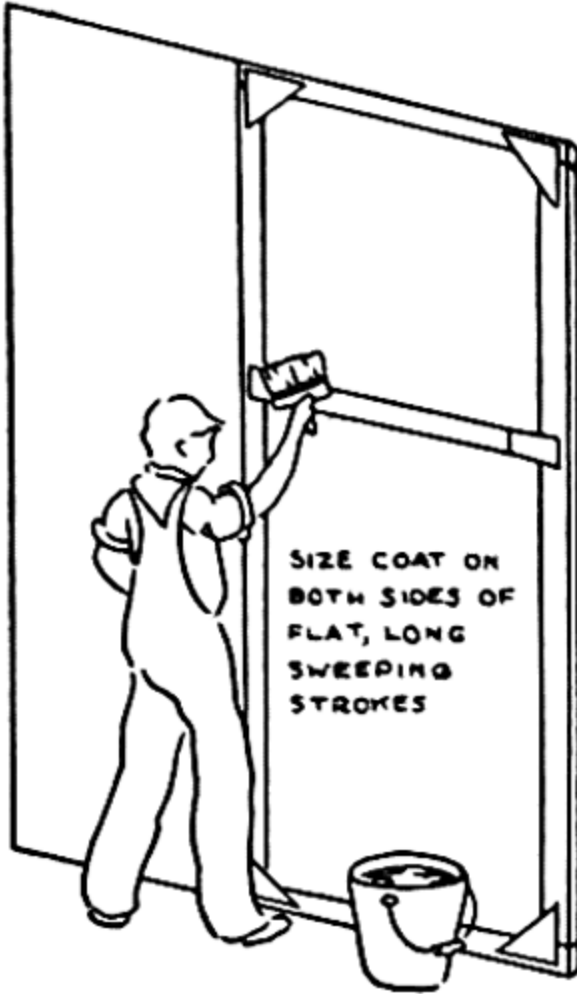
The color for your base coat, of course, will depend upon the scheme and design of your set. However, it is generally agreed that a light shade is best because it takes light better, it can be painted over easily for the next production, and it serves as a good basic foundation with other colors for broken painting, that is, stippling, sponging, spattering, or flecking.

You can readily see that the plain, painted surface of a flat would seem to have no texture and would reflect light garishly if the solid color were not broken up. A smooth, blended, textured-looking surface can be obtained by various methods. A simple way is by sponging the flats, over the base color, with two or three different, contrasting colors or various shades of the same color. Pieces of sponge which have a flat surface can be dabbed against the flat, leaving the design imprint of the sponge. If two or more people are working, have the sponge pieces as nearly uniform as possible, so that the imprints are practically alike. It may be better to have each person go entirely over each flat with his shape of sponge. The sponging colors should be mixed in small pans, and the piece of sponge dipped into the desired color, squeezed out until it is almost dry, then pressed lightly against the surface of the flat and quickly drawn away. The work may be done in circular motions or in definite patterns. Work broadly at first, filling in the open spaces later. You may use another grain of sponge on succeeding coats to get a varied effect.

It is important to put as many flats as possible down together when sponging or stippling. They are more likely to match up, and the cracks between flats will not show as divisions between one flat and its neighbor. After the first sponge marks have dried, apply the second sponge color, and perhaps a third later, in the same manner.

Spattering is another method of giving texture and design to flat-painted scenery. This is accomplished by dipping a brush into a color, letting the surplus drip off, then spattering

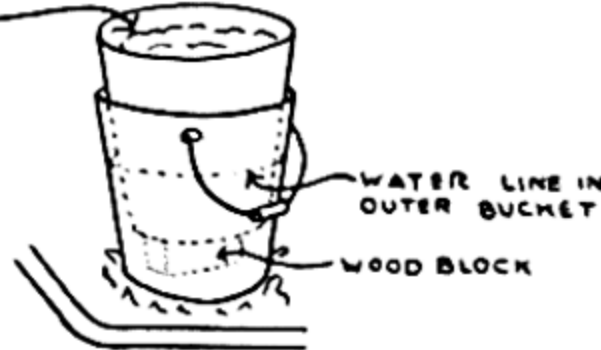
PAINTING



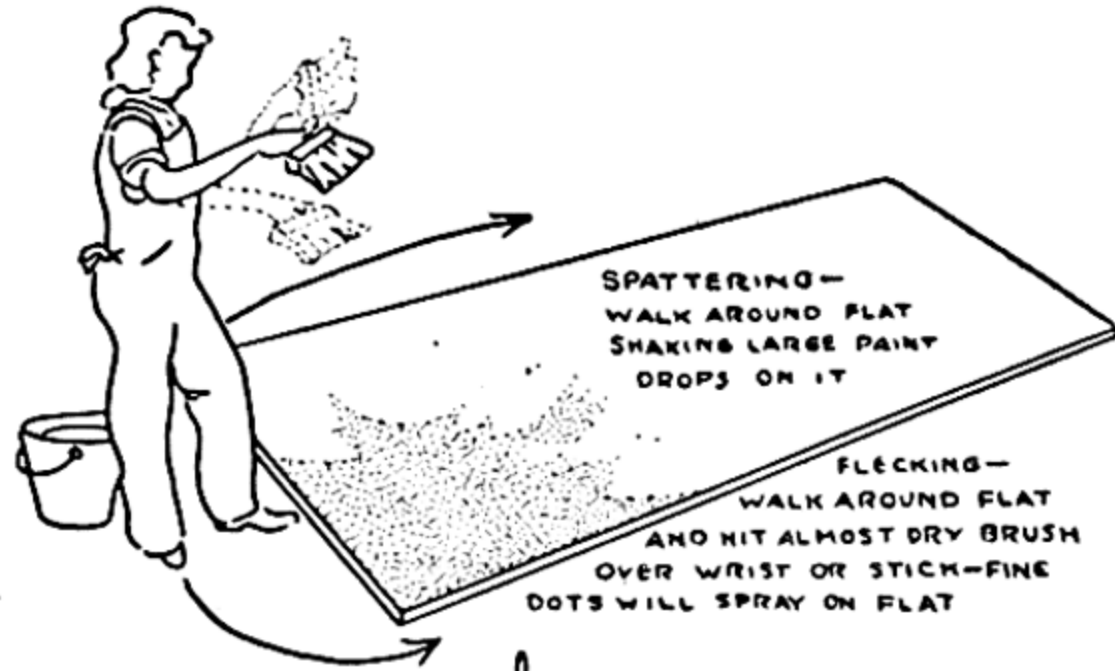
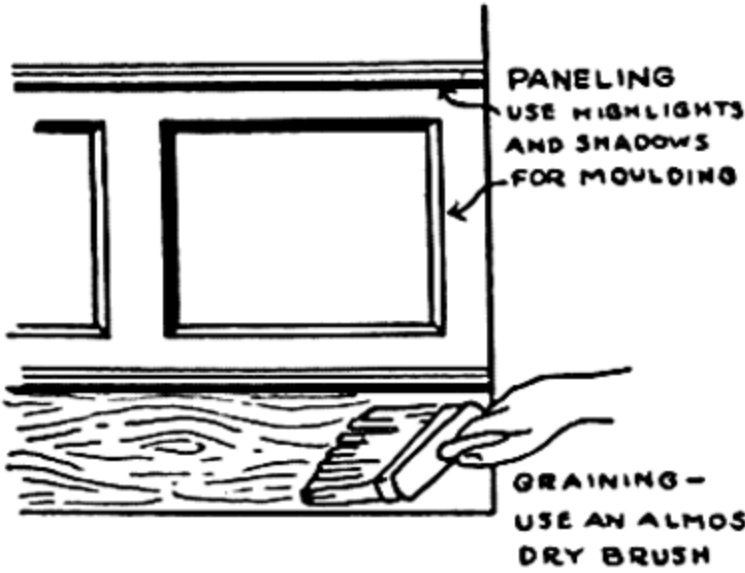
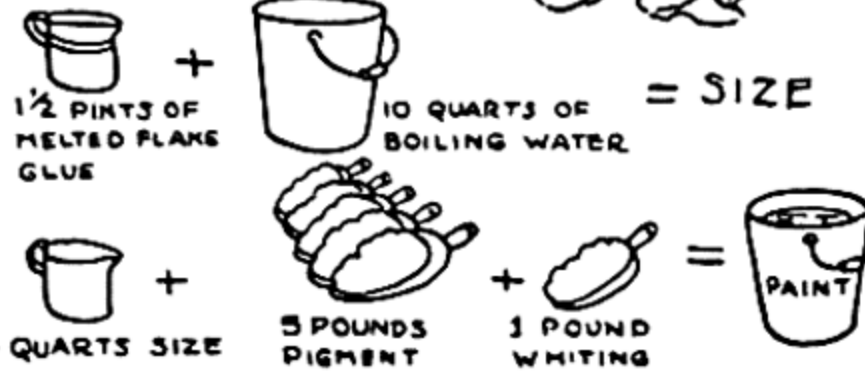
BASE COAT PAINTED FLAT ON FLOOR—CROSS ALL BRUSH STROKES



BUCKET OF FLAKE GLUE COVERED WITH WATER—PLACED IN ANOTHER BUCKET WHICH ACTS AS DOUBLE BOILER



VARIOUS SPONGE ENDS USED IN DIFFERENT COLORS



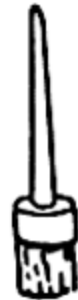
PRIMER



DUTCH PRIMER



LAY-IN



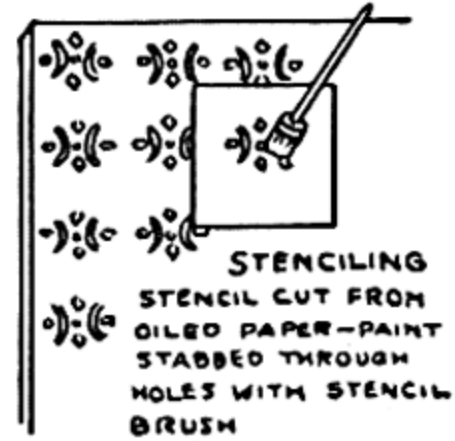
STENCIL



GLUE



LINER



the paint left in the brush over the surface of the flats by a quick shake of the wrist. Walk around the flats to assure even spattering. Be careful that the brush is not too full of paint, or puddles and streaks will result.

Spattering is effective in primary or complementary colors over the base coat. After the first coat is dry, apply the second, and later on, a third color may be spattered on. Be sure that each coat is dry before another is applied.

Flecking is done much the same as spattering, except that the brush is drained almost dry of paint. Strike the brush over the wrist or a short board. This sends a fine spray of minute dots over the surface.

Experiment on practice surfaces with various colors and sizes of dots and sponge or spatter marks. Note the number of fine effects you can obtain. Step back and view them from a distance for best results.

After the flats are stippled or sponged, you may want to add a molding, a border, woodwork, or paneling. For borders or molding be sure to measure from the bottom of the flats. That will insure the matching up of the lines when the flats are set up. Woodwork should be painted at the bottom of each flat and around the doors and window openings. Moldings, panelings, and woodwork around openings should be shaded with a darker strip of color on one side and a lighter one on the other, giving shade to the side where the shadow would fall, and light to the side where light strikes. This highlight and shadow line also gives depth and thickness.

Instead of sponging or stippling your flats over the base coat, you may want a stenciled design. This is easily obtained by cutting a stencil of any size, laying it on the flat, and painting with a stencil brush.

After your scenery has been set up, you may notice that the cracks between flats are very evident, spoiling the effect of a solid wall. This can be remedied by pasting strips of newspaper over the cracks from the top to the bottom of the flats. When the paper strips have dried, paint them with the base color, then sponge, stipple, or stencil them to match the rest of the flats.

How to Light Your Production

MUCH of the appearance of your setting will depend upon the lighting arrangement. The lighting for the various plays in this book has been simplified to such an extent that an elaborate outlay of equipment is unnecessary.

Let us take for granted that you have borderlights and footlights. With these you are sure of plenty of light on both scenery and actors. We also assume that you will use color in your foot and borderlights. Color softens and blends the hues in your set, casting a more natural light on your actors. Red, white, and blue lamps temper the light from the foots. Remember to keep the foots at a low intensity to avoid shadows (strong foots will shadow the actor's face, and give mustaches to women). If you do not have gelatine frames for the borders, you can get colored lamps much like the ones used in the foots. Gelatine frames, into which you can slip sheets of gelatine or cellophane, can be made by cutting two thicknesses of tin or non-inflammable cardboard into a square large enough to fit over each section of borderlight. The center is cut out in a square, leaving the double frames, between which the color medium is inserted.

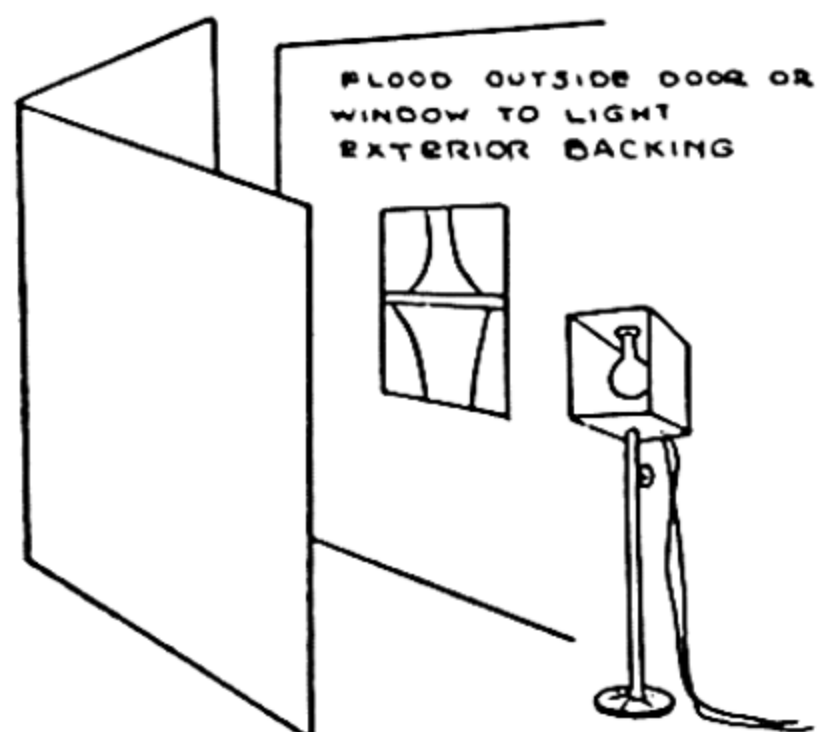
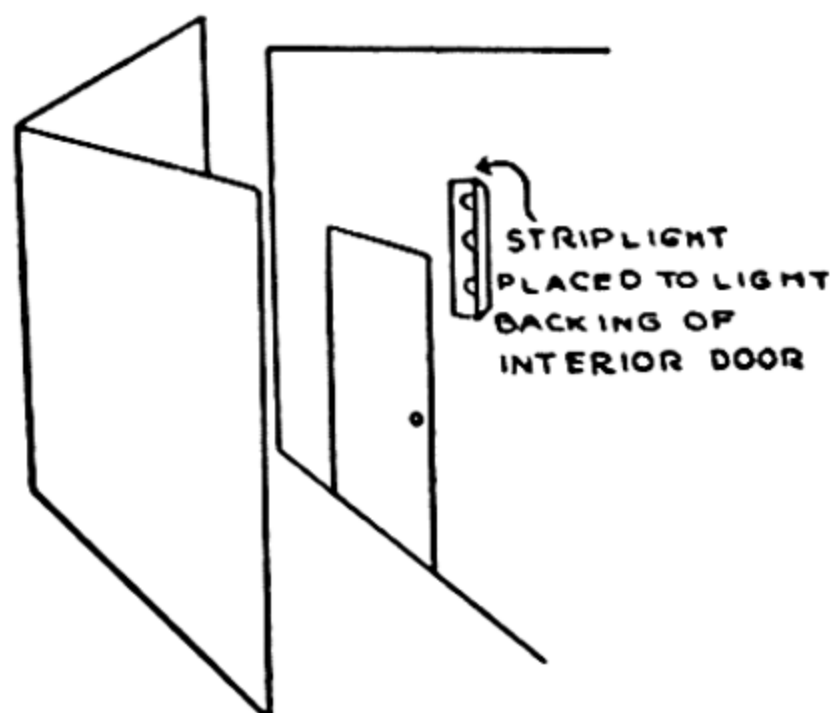
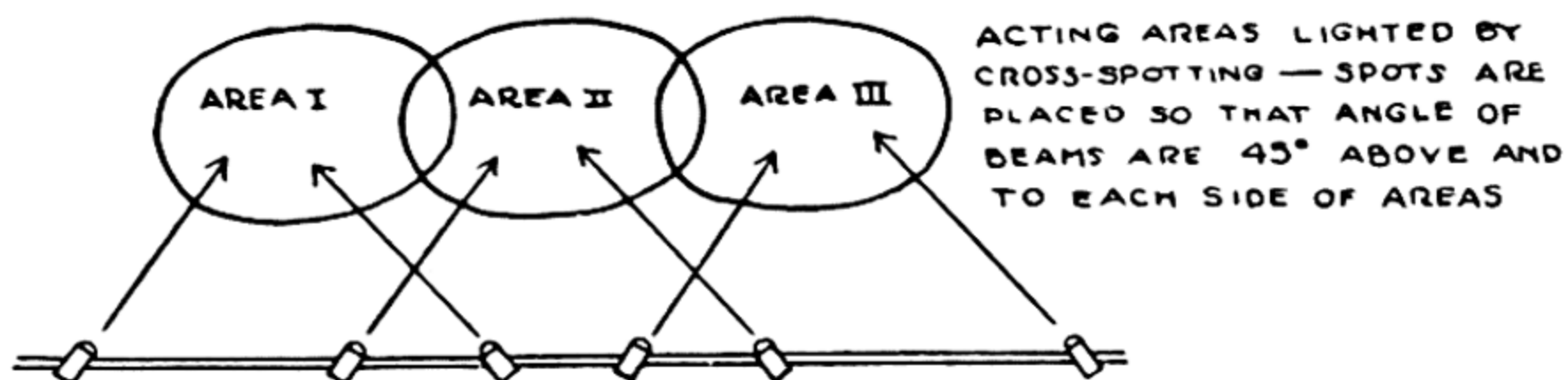
The color used in the borderlights depends greatly upon the colors in your scenery and costumes. No general rule for color can be given. You will have to test the effect of the colors on your set and costumes in order to bring out the hues properly. Perhaps you will try amber, white, and magenta in the borderlights. Then you will see that the green in your walls or costumes shows up a sickly yellow. By experimenting you may find that it is the amber which is killing the green hues on the stage. You will have to substitute another gelatine for the amber, and perhaps another, until you find the combination which brings out the colors on your stage. One general suggestion is that you will find that the warm colors of red, orange, and yellow are intensified by like warm colors in the lights, and the same colors on the stage are dulled by cool colors of blue, green, and violet in the lights. Note the effect of blue light on make-up. Again you will have to experiment.

With foots and borders only, you have an equal amount of light on your set and on your actors. What you really want is more light on your actors than on the scenery. You will have to pick out your actors with spotlights. Then you will want certain areas on the stage lighter than others, for instance, the important center area or the areas in which important action takes place. Perhaps you have windows, fireplaces, or lamps from which light should seem to emanate. Spotlights take care of this specific lighting. Where you will place the spots themselves in order to pick up these specific areas, you will have to determine for yourself. Spotlights may be mounted overhead on the stage on battens, on a beam or balcony front in the auditorium, or on standards in the wings of the stage. The problem of color applies to spotlights as well as to footlights or borderlights. Here is a good idea for avoiding a definite ring or circle of light which a spotlight ordinarily throws. Get oil-frosted gelatine and cut pieces of it to fit into the gelatine frames on the spots. Take a damp cloth and rub lightly a circular spot in the center of the gelatine. The clear light coming through the rubbed spot, bounded by the frosted rim which you have left, will diffuse the ring of light and blend it in with the rest of the lighting on the stage.

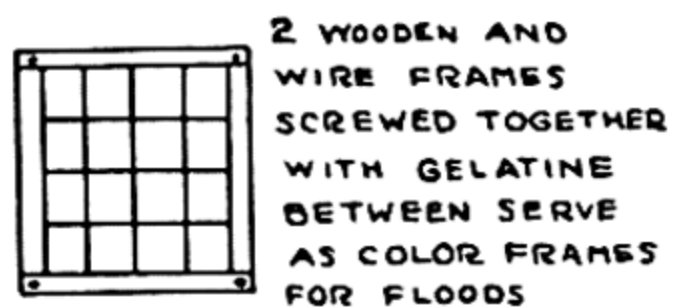
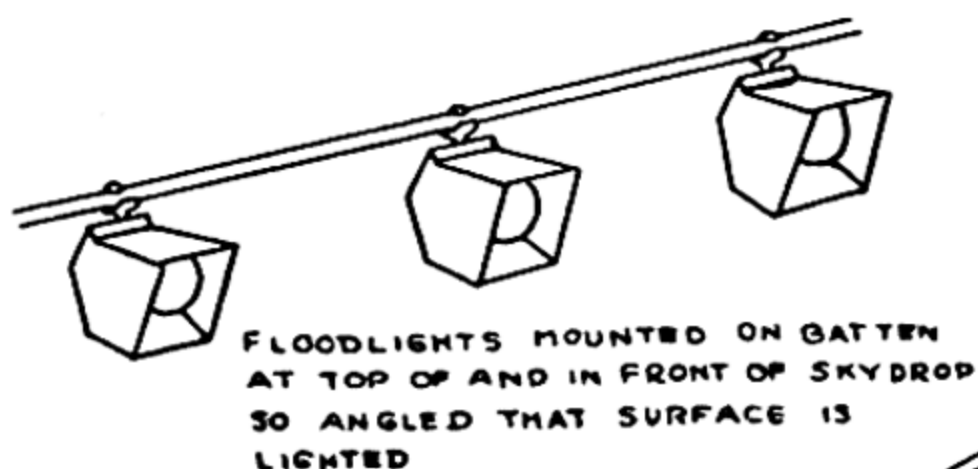
If you have floodlights, then you can solve your difficulties in lighting entrances, vestibules, and back drops. Floods are good for lighting broad surfaces. They throw out a flood of light instead of a restricted focus of brilliance. Sections of strip lights, that is, open troughs with a row of lamps, can be used in place of foots or hung as borderlights if you are without either foots or borders.

Here are further suggestions on stage lighting:

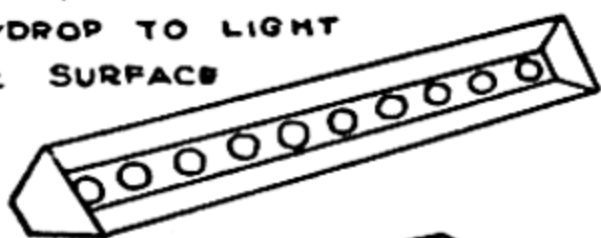
1. Remember that the first purpose of lighting is visibility, but avoid too much light.
2. Lights striking an area from two directions, and the combination of complementary colors on an area, reduce the danger of bad shadows. However, some plays will be enhanced by carefully planned shadow effects.
3. Light should not come straight down or straight in. If light falls as near to a forty-five degree angle as possible, the general effect will be better.



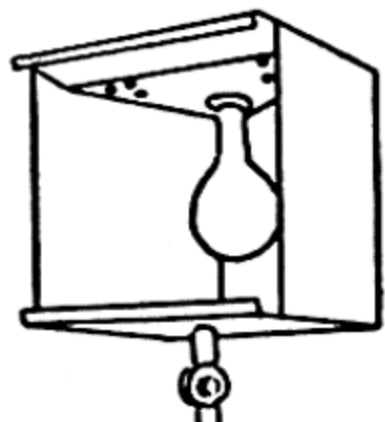
LIGHTING



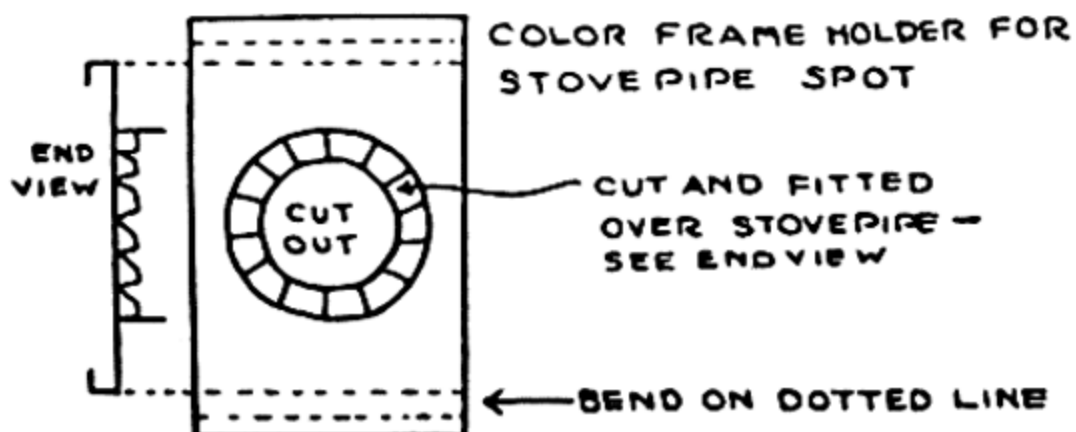
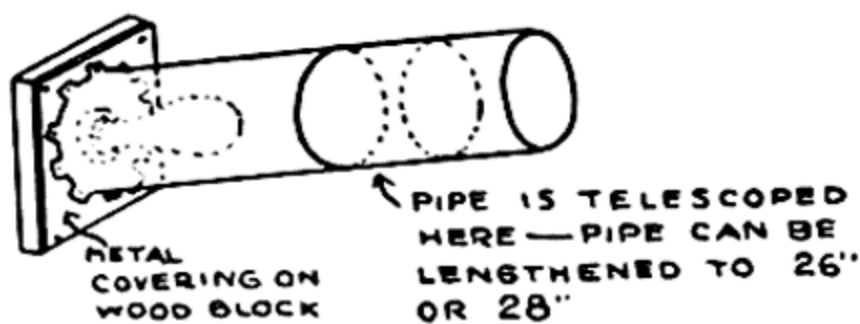
STRIPLIGHT PLACED AT BOTTOM OF SKYDROP TO LIGHT LOWER SURFACE



FLOODLIGHT



STOVEPIPE SPOT



4. It is just as important to rehearse with the lights as it is with the scenery and costumes.
5. The best lighting supports the play and calls no attention to itself.
6. You will save money by using your spotlights and borderlights and other lighting instruments for rehearsal and performances only. Use work lights for activity on the stage at other times.
7. Keep the lighting cable out of the way of actors and crew.
8. It is important that house lights be turned off and on at the proper moments. The mood of the play will affect this: bright lights snapped on quickly after a death scene are shocking.
9. Remember to use four or five thicknesses of cellophane where one of gelatine would suffice.
10. Again, remember to test scenery, make-up, and costumes under the color in your lights.

How to Costume Your Characters

THE actor must not only act his part but look it as well. That is why the dressing of the characters for any play is important enough to receive study early in the rehearsal progress. Do not wait until dress rehearsal arrives to begin consideration of costume.

The costuming must fit in with the scheme of your play, just as the setting does. Study each character and costume him discriminately, whether the play be a modern or a period piece. Your carefully rehearsed play is likely to become a ridiculous farce if the characters are pushed into carelessly gathered-up costumes at the last moment. Make your actors conscious of the responsibility of getting the proper items of costume in every detail. Something resembling the correct piece will not do. Proper and effective costuming is not so much a question of money as of careful consideration.

For modern plays, the characters may wear outfits from their own wardrobes, providing, of course, they are in the best of condition. However, it is not well to have your characters appear on the stage in apparel which they have worn daily and which is immediately recognizable by the audience. Often,

local clothing stores or dress shops will be willing to loan new and smart clothes to a cast, asking in return only an acknowledgment on the program. If costumes are borrowed in this manner, be sure they are returned the day after performance, absolutely no worse for wear. A small courtesy on your part for the favor is to have the garments cleaned and pressed before returning them.

Characters should be costumed attractively and appropriately, but comfortably. Do not put your leading man in a dress suit if he feels and looks awkward in it and cannot become accustomed to appearing at ease in it. Avoid new shoes if they cause the actors to walk as if they were wearing new shoes.

Period or historical plays present more difficult costume problems. If you have sufficient funds to rent costumes from a reliable costume company, your worries are considerably lessened. Even then you must take care to see that the costumes are fitted and worn properly. Most amateur groups are not financially able to rent costumes for their casts. Consequently it becomes their task to costume the characters as simply, inexpensively, and effectively as possible by borrowing, or designing and making the costumes. Perhaps the really most inexpensive method of costuming a cast appropriately, especially for a period play, is to make the costumes. There are a number of costume fabric companies from which you can buy good materials for stage costuming at reasonable prices.

By using originality, by raiding the attic and ragbag, by using dyes and bits of trimming, or by purchasing inexpensive but attractive and appropriate materials, you will be amazed at the costumes you can design and execute at very little cost and with great effectiveness. The important thing is to be exact and accurate. Study pictures, drawings, and patterns for details. There is a danger of turning out ludicrous results if you are not careful to be authentic in detail.

Old hats can be ripped apart and remodeled. Old lace curtains and draperies can be dyed and fashioned into attractive stage apparel. Gather up such valuable odds and ends as old bedspreads, draperies, outmoded evening dresses, bits of ribbon, beads, bits of jewelry, tassels, Christmas tree decorations, and bright scarfs. Old shoes and bedroom slippers can be cut down

or built up, painted, decorated, and emerge as appropriate foot casings for certain costumes. An old dog chain, gilded, becomes a handsome piece on the stage. Even macaroni, when covered with gilt paint and strung, makes surprisingly beautiful costume jewelry. Strands of pearls from the ten-cent store can be sewed on costumes to create fine and rich-looking decoration. Long cotton hose, also from the ten-cent store, can be made into tights by extending the double thickness at the top and sewing them on to short pants. Cardboard and crinoline, painted or gilded, are useful in fashioning hats, shoes, jewelry, and other accessories. Cheap linoleum may be used for like purposes. Wood makes realistic swords and hand properties. Papier-mâché and soap, carved into ornaments, are appropriately decorative.

In addition to the materials which you can purchase from fabric companies, there are a number of inexpensive materials to be found in dry goods stores. Unbleached muslin, misprinted cottons, cambric, cheesecloth, tarlatan, cretonne, imitation brocade, sateen, duvetyne, cotton flannel, burlap, denim, imitation felt, rayon, cotton batting, oilcloth, and buckram all can be utilized in making costumes, and many of them take on a richness under stage lights.

Be careful of the colors, the cutting, and the fitting when making your own costumes.

IN COSTUMING THE ACTOR, REMEMBER

One person should oversee the costumes for an entire cast in order that the costuming be consistent.

The color of the costume must fit in with the setting, the lights, the character, the coloring of the actor, the mood of the play, and the rest of the cast.

The costume must fit, and feel as comfortable as possible. The definite cut and silhouette of the costume are important.

The importance of the character affects the brightness and amount of ornamentation on the costume. Inexpensive materials often look richer and more appropriate on the stage than expensive materials.

Such matters as heel height, skirt length, and sleeve shape

should be considered carefully. It is well to study a full-length reflection of one's self in costume.

Costume accessories, such as trains, swords, scarfs, canes, etc., require careful practice in proper handling.

If wigs are worn, they must be adjusted and dressed so that they will not look like wigs. It is better to let the hair grow and curl it appropriately, even for men, than to wear a wig.

How to Make Up Your Cast

You can obtain suitable cosmetics for stage make-up at some ten-cent stores. Their brands of cold cream, eye shadow, eyebrow pencils, rouge, and some powders are satisfactory if you cannot afford regular theatrical make-up supplies. Here is a list of the materials you will need:

Cold cream. Foundation, or base colors of grease paint (juvenile, middle age, sallow and robust old age, and yellow, brown, etc., for Chinese, Negro, and other special make-ups).

Liner colors for wrinkle lines, shadows, etc. (black, brown, gray, blue, white, and yellow).

Powder of varying shades (avoid pink powders. Choose shades ranging from a yellowish to a suntan).

Moist rouge (fairly dark) to be used for both cheeks and lips.

Crepe hair (several feet of white, gray, brown, red, and black).

Spirit gum (the only dependable substance for adhering crepe hair).

Aluminum powder, clown-white grease paint, or white powder or cornstarch for whitening and silvering hair and beards.

Small brushes, powder puffs, large mirrors, hand mirrors, orange sticks, flat toothpicks, matches, combs and brushes, wire hairpins and bobby pins, scissors, feathers or baby brushes (for brushing powder), soft cloths or paper tissues (for removal), and eyebrow pencils (black and brown).

GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR APPLYING MAKE-UP

Cold cream. Cover all parts to be made up with a coat of cold cream; then wipe it away thoroughly. The skin will

absorb an imperceptible amount which provides a smooth surface on which to build.

Foundation or base color. Select the complexion color suitable to the character you are playing and streak the portions which are to be covered. Smooth out carefully with the finger tips until the color is uniformly spread. Omit application of foundation on eyelids or parts of the face where beards are to be adhered. Apply the foundation sparingly at first. It is easier to add more than to remove an excess amount. It is important to blend the foundation carefully over all parts of the face, neck, or any part of the body exposed. A well-blended foundation gives a good working surface and prevents the telltale line between the stage make-up and the character's own flesh color. Watch the blending at the hair line.

Age shadows and highlights. Hollows appear with the increasing age of the character — sunken eye sockets, shadows beneath protruding cheek and temple bones, down the nostril lines, in the neck, and between the knuckles of the hands. A shadow may be placed below the lower lip or below folds of flesh. For shadowing to produce hollows, put a dot of shading (gray or brown) in the desired place and blend it in triangular form. Shadows which do not occupy a large area may be drawn on with a brush, and then smudged or blended with the tip of the finger.

Every depression has its corresponding highlight. When you have blended in the shadow where the flesh sinks in, highlight the corresponding bone structure, or the protruding flesh, with a white or yellow line, smudging and blending it as you did the shadow.

Wrinkle lines. The number of lines in make-up depends on the age of the character, ranging from a few frown lines between the eyes, crow's-feet at the corners of the eyes, and fine smile lines for middle age to a network of wrinkle lines in forehead, around eyes, nose, mouth, chin, and neck for extreme old age. Follow the natural wrinkles on the face or the creases where wrinkles will be. A movement of facial muscles, that is, screwing the face up by raising the eyebrows to get forehead wrinkle lines, pulling the eyebrows together to get frown lines, squinting the eyes for crow's-feet, and grinning broadly to get

APPLICATION OF FOUNDATION

DOT FOUNDATION
OR BASE OVER
ENTIRE FACE
AND NECK WITH
FINGERTIPS



STRAIGHT—
BLEND BASE OR
FOUNDATION
COLOR EVENLY
OVER FACE—BE
SURE TO BLEND:
1-INTO HAIRLINE
2-3-EYE CORNERS
4-NOSTRIL CORNERS
5-MOUTH CORNERS
6-NECK
7-IN AND BEHIND
EARS

MAKE UP



ROUGE ON LIPS SHOULD NOT
EXTEND TO MOUTH
CORNERS

STRAIGHT—
ROUGE BLENDED OVER
TRIANGLE ON CHEEK,
LIGHTLY ON TEMPLES,
LIGHT TOUCH ON
CHIN



EYEBROWS TOUCHED UP
LIGHTLY WITH BROWN
LINER



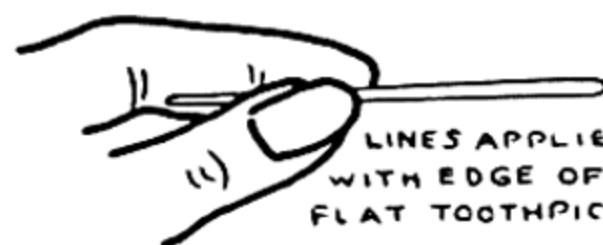
NOTE THAT LOWER LASHLINE DOES NOT EXTEND
TO INNER CORNER

STRAIGHT—
EYE SHADOW IN BLUE OR
LIGHT BROWN BLENDED
FROM UPPER LASHLINE TO
EYEBROW—DARK BROWN LINER
ACCENTS LASH LINES

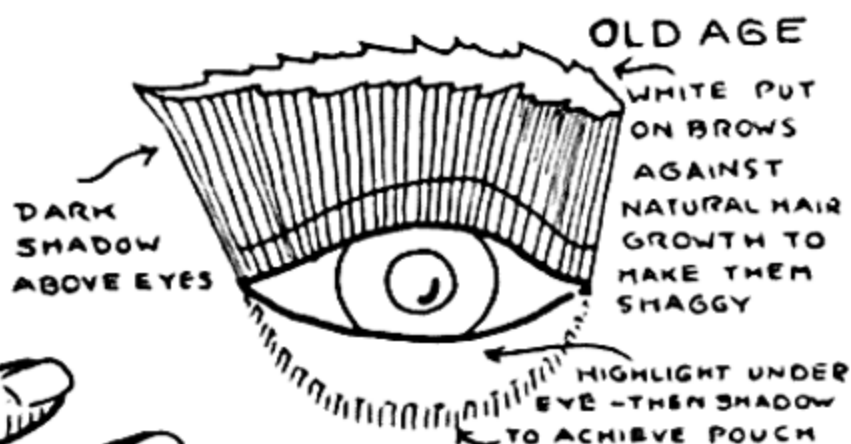


OLD AGE

1-NOSTRIL SHADOW
2-CHEEK SHADOW
3-FOREHEAD LINES
4-TEMPLE SHADOW
5-CROWSFEET
6-FROWN LINES
DOTTED LINES
INDICATE HIGHLIGHTS



LINES APPLIED
WITH EDGE OF
FLAT TOOTHPICK



OLD AGE

WHITE PUT
ON BROWS
AGAINST
NATURAL HAIR
GROWTH TO
MAKE THEM
SHAGGY

HIGHLIGHT UNDER
EYE—THEN SHADOW
TO ACHIEVE POUCH



SHADOW UNDER
EYE—THEN
HIGHLIGHT
FOR SHRUNKEN
EFFECT



THIN HANDS BY SHADOWING BETWEEN
FINGERS AND CORDS—HIGHLIGHT
TOPS OF FINGERS AND CORDS

mouth and cheek lines, will indicate where wrinkles should be drawn. The color for the wrinkle line should be a dark gray or brown or a gray liner mixed with a slight touch of deep red. You can mix your colors between the thumb and forefinger, blending them until they are smooth and plastic. Dip a flat toothpick into the color, roll the flat end of the toothpick between the thumb and forefinger where you have mixed the color, and draw the wrinkle lines. They should taper out at the ends; this can be accomplished by turning the flat toothpick on its side as you near the end of the line. Forehead lines run parallel with the eyebrows, tapering slightly downward at the ends. Crow's-feet should spread in fanlike shape from the eye corners. The nostril line should run downward, parallel to the cheek shadow line. For old age, the lines from the corners of the mouth should run downward with a slight curve inward. Remember to highlight each wrinkle line with a corresponding line of white or yellow which is smoothed out.

Eyes. To bring out the eyes, which is especially important in juvenile make-up, a line of blue dots should be placed on the upper eyelid and blended out to the corners of the eyes and up to the eyebrows. No shadow is put beneath the eyes unless to indicate hollows for age. Outline the eyes by drawing thin lines on the upper and lower lids along the very edge next to the lashes. Use the toothpick again or a fine brush. Black liner is used for dark people and brown for light. The eye lining should begin at the inner corner of the eye on the upper lid, and about midway from the inner corner on the lower lid. The two lines are drawn to meet at the outer corner of the eye. If you wish to enlarge the eye, draw the lines beyond the outer corners of the eye.

The eyebrows should be accentuated by drawing over them a black or brown pencil. The line may extend beyond the natural line. If the eyebrows are too thick or crooked, block them out with foundation, or soap them down and put foundation over the soap. Then draw in a new eyebrow line. You can simulate shaggy eyebrows by applying foundation freely to the brows, brushing them backwards and touching them up with powder. For exaggerated shaggy eyebrows, use bits of crepe hair or hair clipped from the actor's head. Apply spirit

gum to a line over the eyebrows, which has been left free of foundation paint, and pat on the artificial or natural hair. It can be trimmed to the proper proportion.

Beards. Although crepe hair is the usual medium for beards, it is much better to use the natural hair of the actor whenever possible. Clip strands of hair from the head where the loss will not be noticed. In using crepe hair, have it unwound and straightened before time for use. This can be done by unbraiding the hair, dampening it, and suspending it with a weight on the bottom, or by simply wrapping it around a burning electric light for a short time. It can be pressed out straight with a warm iron. The strands should then be separated and cut into various lengths. Hair, crepe or natural, must be adhered with spirit gum. Do not trust any other substance. Since spirit gum will not adhere except to an ungreased portion, and as it is easier to shape the beard after it is on the face, a good method is to apply the foundation to the face, leaving bare the space to which the beard is to be applied, and in a shape corresponding to that which you want the beard to assume. Apply the spirit gum to the bare surface and pat on strands of natural or crepe hair so that they seem to grow in the natural direction. Now the beard can be trimmed to the exact shape. Use the hair sparingly for a more natural effect. Sometimes, if carefully removed, the beard can be used a second time. In removing a beard, pull off the hair, and remove the spirit gum with rubbing alcohol. Eyebrows and sideburns are fashioned in the same manner as beards and mustaches.

Cheeks and lips. Apply a dot of moist rouge to the cheeks and blend into a triangular formation extending along the cheek bone and jaw bone towards the nose. The rouge should be brought close to the nostril if the face is plump and round. If the features are thin and angular, avoid bringing the rouge close to the nose. Blend the rouge carefully to avoid a splotchy look and ragged edges.

The moist rouge also serves as the best lipstick. Be sure to apply rouge to the inside of the lips. Do not paint the lips to the outer corners of the mouth. If the lips are too thin, paint them above and below the natural line. If they are too full, block out the edges of the natural line with foundation. Re-

member that you can change the contour of your lips by blocking out the natural line with foundation and painting in a lip line of the desired shape. Lips become less colorful with age. For extreme old age, the natural color should be completely blocked out with foundation.

Powder. The shade of powder should correspond to the foundation color, but perhaps be a shade lighter. Avoid pink powders, because they accent bone structure. After the make-up is complete to this point, beat in a heavy coat of powder over the entire face. Brush it smooth with a feather, rabbit's foot, or soft brush. Do not rub. Remember, lines blur easily and cannot be readily renewed after powder is applied. After the powder has been applied and brushed away smoothly, retouch the eyebrows if they need it, and moisten the lips to remove powder from the lip coloring.

Hair. After make-up is complete, the hair should be dressed carefully to fit the character. If a wig is used, adjust it with care, being sure that the lines of the forehead and the wig are blended with foundation. Use your own hair in preference to a wig. Mascara will darken hair. You can mold the hair in many ways by using vaseline. If hair powder is to be used, protect the face and costume with a cover, then have someone beat in the silver powder, white powder, or cornstarch. Be sure that all loose powder is shaken out so that it will not fly around during action on the stage. Clown-white grease paint is effective for graying hair at the temples, and can be used for graying the whole head, but it is not easily removed. After the hair has been powdered and combed, run a wet brush down the part in the hair to remove powder that has collected there.

Removal. In order to remove make-up, cover the face freely with cold cream, wiping it off with a soft cloth or paper tissue. You may want to use soap and water after the cold cream has been removed.

IN MAKING UP, REMEMBER

The best sort of make-up does not call attention to itself. Too little make-up is far better than too much.

If you will not smear your make-up in putting on your cos-

tume, delay dressing until the make-up is complete. If you must dress first, cover your costume carefully with a smock or other garment.

You must make up every part of the body which will be revealed — hands, arms, neck, back, and lobes of ears, etc. — as carefully as you make up the face.

Careful blending of the foundation is an important first step. With increasing age, foundation color grows more sallow, lips thinner and less brilliant, and the number of hollows and wrinkle lines more numerous.

Rouge and lipstick should be applied according to the contours of your face in order to enhance individual features. Men should use rouge and lipstick sparingly, or not at all.

The nose can be made thinner and longer by drawing a white line down the center of the ridge; it can be made shorter by applying a shadow of rouge on the tip. Veins can be made prominent by touching them with blue or gray, highlighting the line with white. A receding chin may be built up by highlighting the whole chin.

One person should check the make-ups for an entire cast to be sure they are consistent.

Make-ups should be tested under the lights in which they will appear on the stage.

Suggestions to the Property Crew

A GOOD property man and his crew are as important to a successful production as the leading man or leading lady. The assembling and care of properties is a vital task in the whole scheme of producing a play.

Properties include the absolute essentials called for in the script and the additional pieces included in the design of the setting for added effectiveness. The essential articles consist of the actual furniture, the pictures, food, flowers, draperies, books, and ornaments. Properties also include the hand props, that is, any articles carried on the stage by the actors.

Early in the production schedule, a complete list of properties

should be made. Every article in the list should be described accurately, and if necessary, measurements and drawings of the article should be given.

The property crew should begin early to arrange for the properties. Find out where they can be obtained. You may have to borrow, beg, or buy, but make sure that every property, to the most minute detail, is on hand by dress rehearsal if not before. Hand props should be obtained early in the rehearsal schedule so that the characters may become familiar with the handling of them.

No effort should be spared in securing every article, and the *exact* article needed. If the script calls for a chair, know what kind and size of chair; not just any chair will do.

The property man must see to the arrangement of the furniture and other properties on the stage. Of course, every article must be exactly as it was planned and used in rehearsal. An inch or two in arrangement may throw off the action and movement of the play.

The property man should check on all properties before the rehearsal or performance begins. If some properties are to be brought on during the play, see that they are conveniently located and always in the same place.

SOUND EFFECTS

The effectiveness of plays performed before a curtain setting will be increased if appropriate sound effects are produced off stage. The flick of a door lock and the creak of an old hinge give the effect of an opening door. If there is a real door somewhere backstage, opening it will perhaps provide what you want. For the sound of a slamming door, if you have no real door to operate, a board slapped against the floor will make the appropriate sound.

Accurate sound effects are important for any play. If there must be a doorbell and a telephone bell, be sure you have the right sounds for each. You can get electric buzzers cheaply, or have hand-pushed bells or buzzers for doorbells and telephones.

Sheets of tin make the sound of thunderclaps. A vacuum

cleaner will give the sound of a purring motor. A rosined string, drawn through a hole in a tin can, represents the sound of squealing brakes. Beans, pebbles, or buckshot rolled around in a shallow pan, or dropped on a box covered with screening, will give the sound effect of falling rain. Visible rain through windows or doors can be effected by stringing up rows of very thin strips of clear cellophane, which can be gently swayed by the breeze from an electric fan. Red and orange and yellow strips of paper or silk, blown by an electric fan, will give the illusion of flames. Blocks of wood can be manipulated to give the sound of horses' hoofs.

Recordings of automobile crashes, city noises, dog fights, fire trucks, sirens, trains, machine guns, or crowds can be obtained from recording companies or stage equipment companies.

Phonograph records used for musical backgrounds often are suitable only in part. Find the portion of the recording that you want to use and mark the place for the beginning and ending with a piece of chalk. It will not harm the record, and it is thus possible to play exactly that portion of the record which is suitable. It is best to have actual musicians off stage for musical sound effects or accompaniment when possible.

Note on Acting Versions

THE script for each play in this book contains the consecutive action and position of every player from the moment he steps on the stage until he makes his exit. Bits of business and hints on proper reactions accompanying the lines have been described. The movement of the actors has been planned so that the flow of action is smooth throughout the play, and the grouping of the actors unconfused.

Few suggestions on interpretation are given. Freedom is given the actor and director to work out characterization and the best interpretation of lines. Only one suggestion is offered for making lines clear to the audience. Every line has a central thought, a high point of meaning, which is found in a word

or a group of words. Emphasize this word or group of words. This process of "pointing" lines is important for amateurs. The timing of lines and action, and the tempo and rhythm of the play's movement, are left to the discretion of the actor and director.

If the stage directions and positions of players, as marked, are followed closely, all blocking, awkward grouping, and unbalanced scenes will be avoided. If the director changes or adds action, he must be careful to see that it fits in with the general movement in relation to the setting and the rest of the action.

The conventional symbols for stage directions have been used throughout the acting versions. Right and left (designated by R and L) indicate the areas on the stage to the actor's left and right from the center of the acting space (center designated by C). Down left and down right (designated by DL and DR) indicate the areas downstage, nearest the audience, to the actor's right and left as he faces the audience. The same meaning is carried out by the directions up left and up right (designated by UL and UR). Right center and left center (designated by RC and LC) indicate the areas to the actor's right and left of center stage.

PART II. ONE-ACT PLAYS

The Tarnished Witherspoons

Christopher's "Death"

The Cue He Knew

Title - ~~[REDACTED]~~

Author ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

Accession No. 62-1535

Call No. 820.8 ~~215.1~~

[illegible]

Suggestions to Producers

FOR THE CYCLORAMA SETTING OF THE ONE-act farce, *The Tarnished Witherspoons*, only a masked entrance at the rear center is needed. If you have a choice between a light- or dark-colored cyclorama, use the light-colored one. Any means for providing a colorful atmosphere for this play will enhance the farce. A contrast between the portion representing the walls of the room and the wall of the hallway will make the setting more gay. Pictures may be hung from the batten to which the cyclorama is attached. Be sure that any pictures you use are large and brilliantly colored.

A golden-yellow wall surface with rich brown woodwork can be used on the cut-down cardboard setting. The baseboard, if you choose to use one, should be no more than six nor less than four inches wide. Glance through the latest wallpaper sample book if you want ideas for a design to be used on these walls.

The plans for the well-equipped stage setting show inset bookcases. These may be made by blocking out the bottom part of door flats and attaching shelves to the backs of the flats, or window flats can be converted into inset bookcases. An interesting room can be created by letting the windows, the bookcases, and the doorway be arched. If you wish, the windows may be run down to the floor and be made of door flats. Panes can be suggested with black tape, and glass curtains covering all of each window may eliminate the necessity for backings. Colorful drapes at the windows and on each side of the center rear opening will dress the setting and suggest the modest wealth of the family.

Old, overstuffed furniture with bright covers will be suitable if it is impossible to find ultramodern pieces. Grandma's chair should be distinctly of a fifty-years-ago period and quite in contrast with the rest of the room.

Notice that for this setting the lighter and brighter the coloring the better.

The furniture for your setting may be borrowed from a home in your community, or may be obtained from a second-hand store or furniture store in return for an acknowledgment or small advertisement on your program.

The slip covers for the furniture, if you are unable to obtain them ready-made, may easily be fashioned from very inexpensive material, such as unbleached muslin or cambric. It can be made to have an attractive and bright printed design by drawing on the material with ordinary wax crayons. Gaily colored drapes and valances for the windows, and covers for the tables and cushions, can be made in the same manner.

Bookshelves can be attractively filled by taking pieces of cardboard, bending them to the shape of books, and painting or crayoning them in bright colors. Bronze or silver paint on doorknobs, light fixtures, etc. is a simple way to make such articles look as if they belonged in a home.

Utilize as much as possible the inexpensive but practical cardboard and the cans of paint you can buy at any ten-cent store.

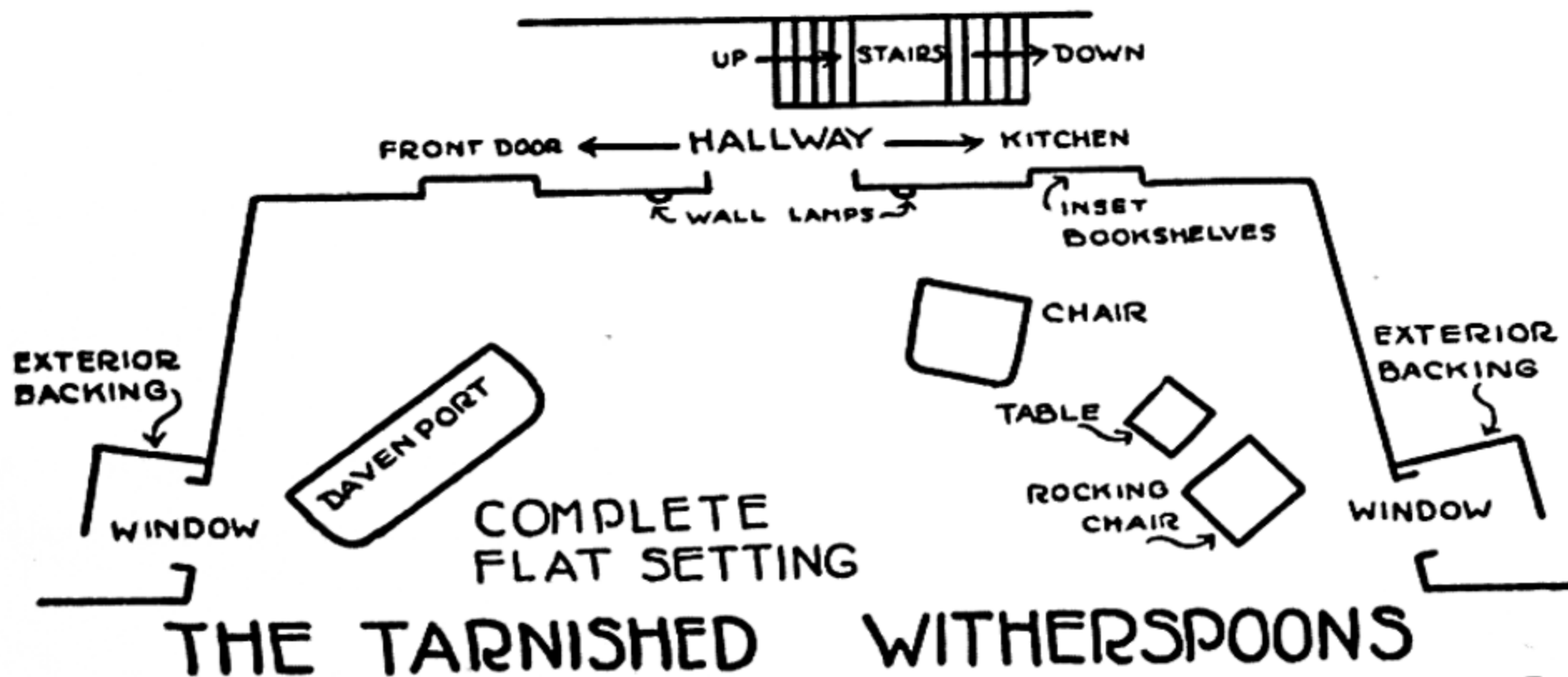
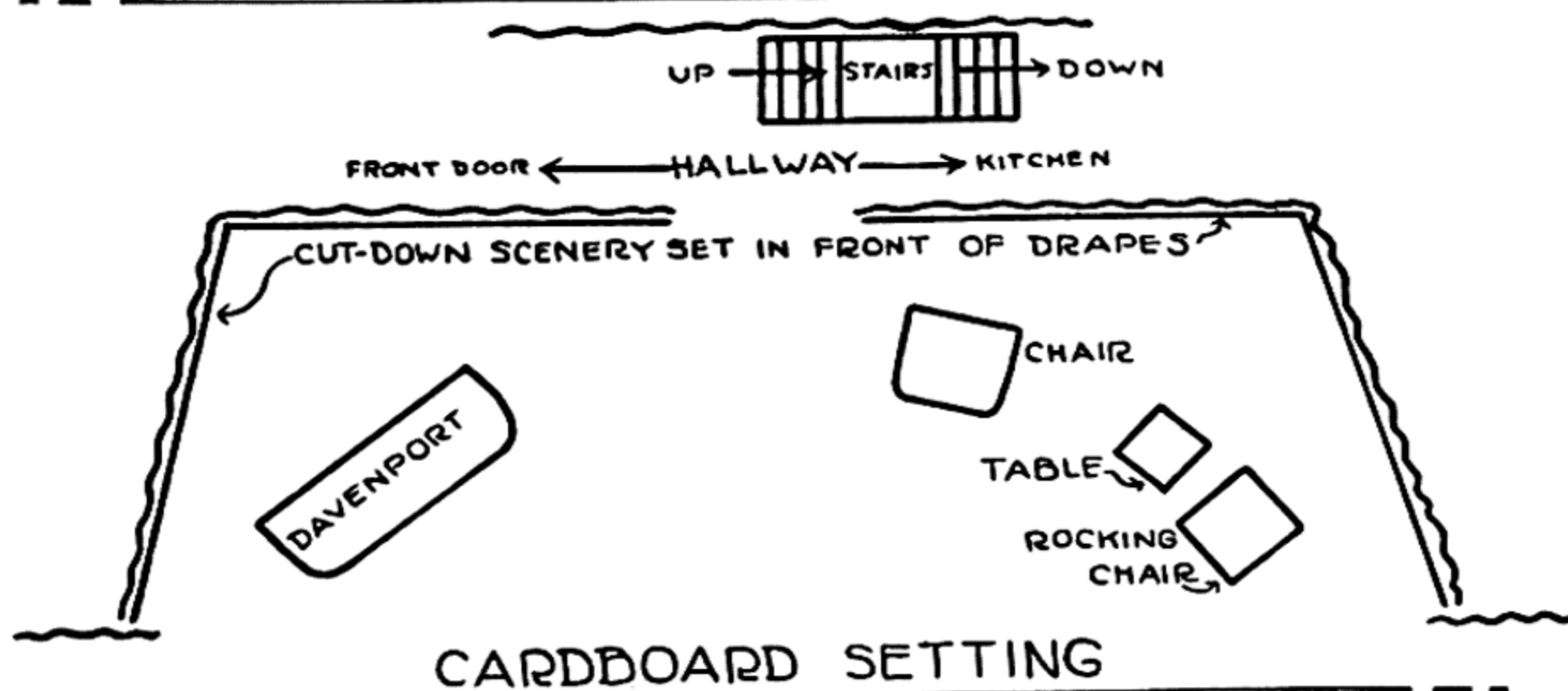
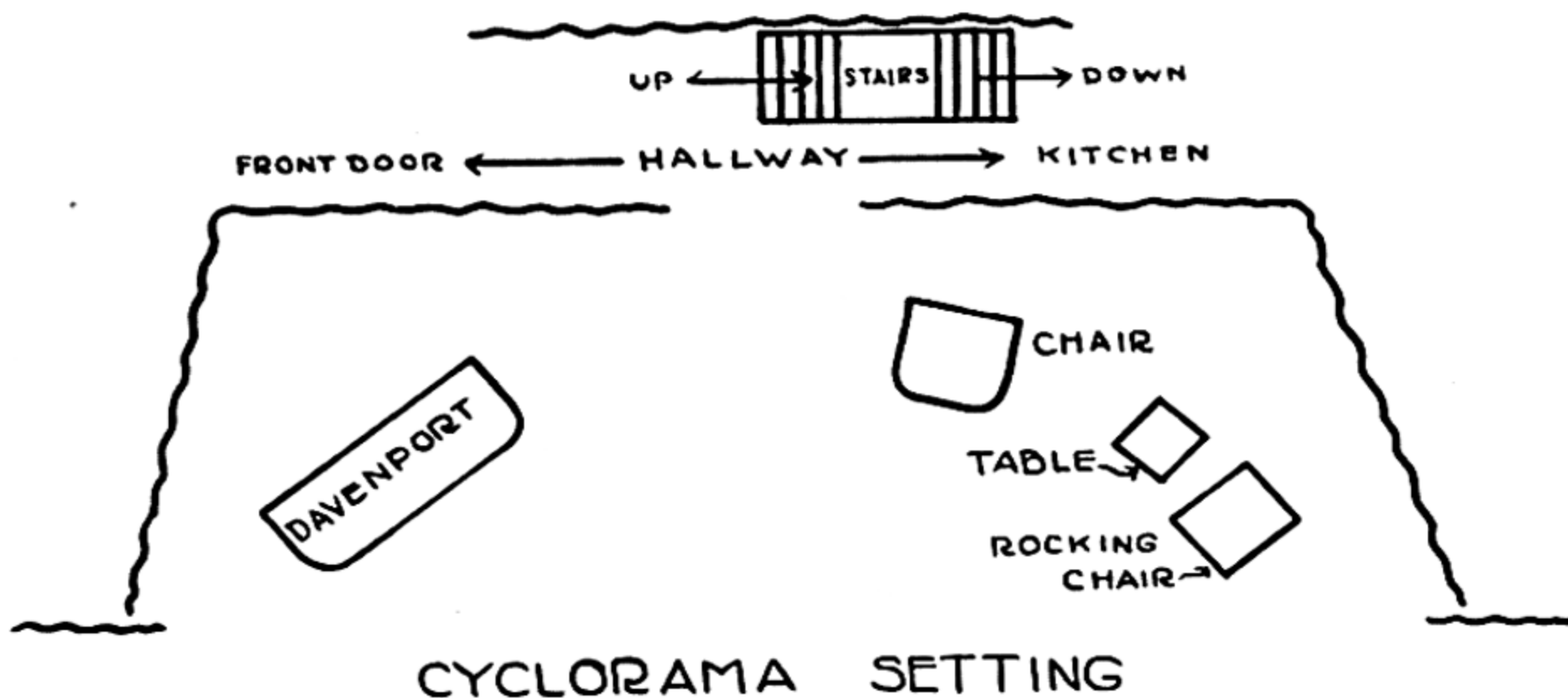
The stairway for the set can be constructed very easily if your stage does not have a set of steps and platform which can be used for a stairway and landing.

A set of steps, merely boxes of increasing sizes, can be placed together and set against a table, which will serve as the landing. They should be nailed together or made absolutely firm, then covered with a stair carpet or painted a solid color.

The railing for the stairway can be cut from a flat piece of cardboard or made of thin pieces of wood and nailed to the steps and landing piece.

LIGHTING

The lighting plans for all types of settings for this play are much alike in that a brilliance of light should be used throughout. Pale amber or straw will be the best colors. Floodlights should be set on each side of the back entrance. General illumination can be augmented with spotlights which cover the



important acting areas (center, L on armchair and rocker, and R on davenport).

PROPERTIES

Scrapbook, with newspaper clippings, pictures, and pressed bit of greenery

Knitting basket, with balls of yarn, knitting needles, and piece of knitted wool

Knitting book, merely a pamphlet or leaflet

One overstuffed chair with removable seat cushion

Davenport with cushions

Old-fashioned, low rocker

Small table

COSTUMES

Grandma. Black or gray, long-sleeved, high-necked silk dress, small white apron. A lace or knitted shoulder shawl fastened with brooch. Gold-rimmed spectacles. Perhaps a lace cap.

Grandpa. Old trousers held up by wide suspenders. Old shirt, perhaps with detachable collar which is missing. Old, worn bedroom slippers. Half spectacles. Cane.

Margaret. Trim housedress of bright print or flowered cotton material with neat collar and cuffs.

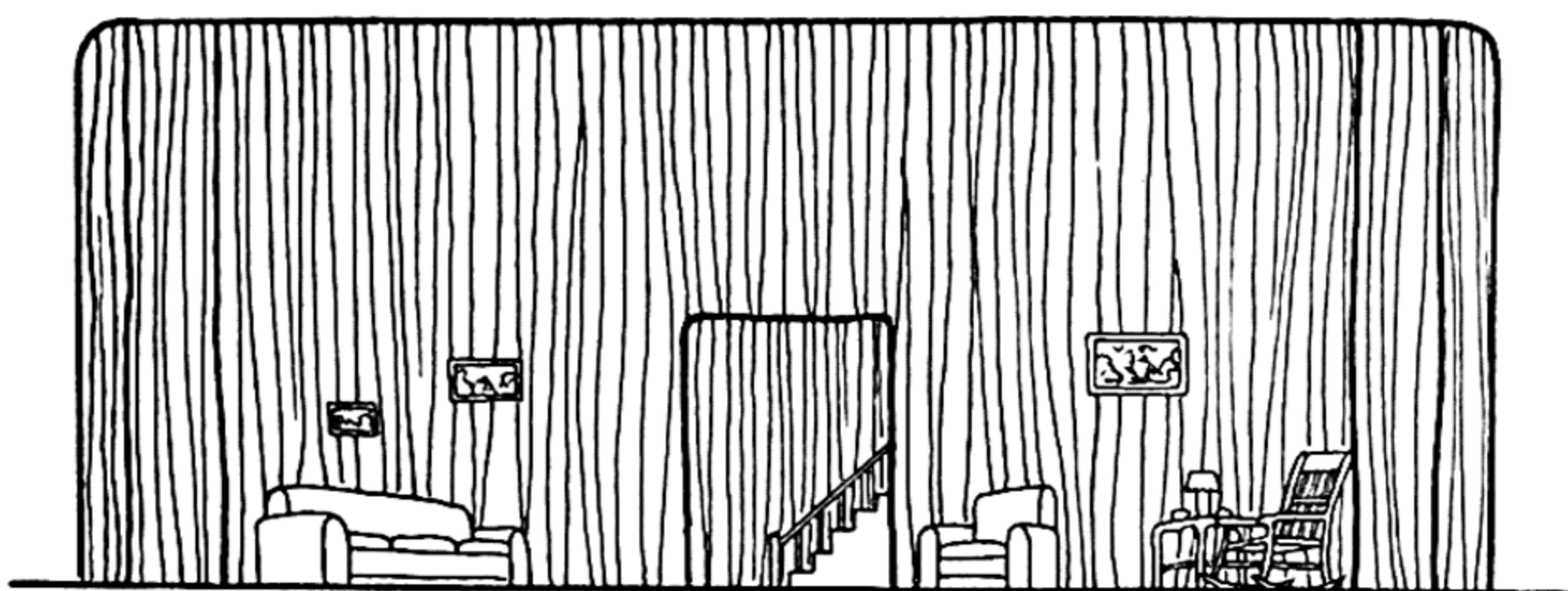
Henry. Well-cut business suit of dark color. Handkerchief in upper left-hand pocket of coat.

Helen. Bright sport dress. Attractive, harmonizing shoes. Pert-looking hat.

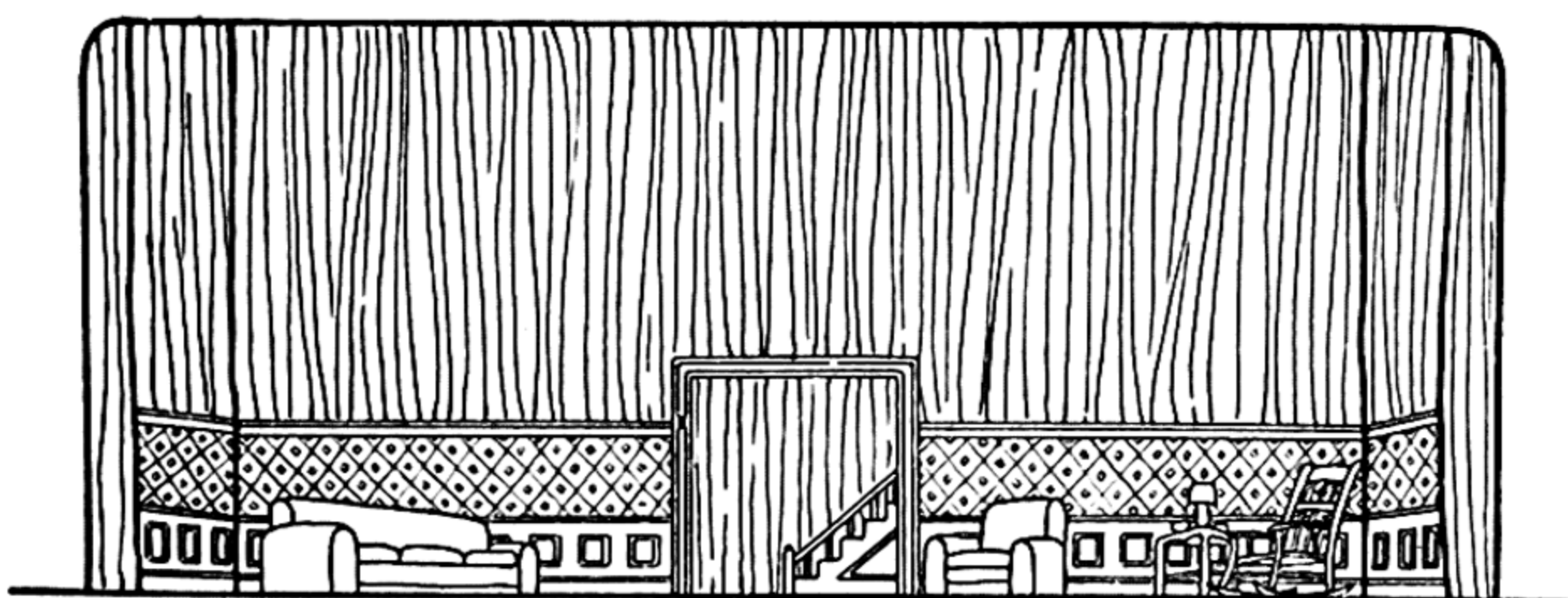
Charles. Sport trousers and sport coat or sweater. Old hat, crushable, such as high school boys wear in varied and collegiate manner.

MAKE-UP

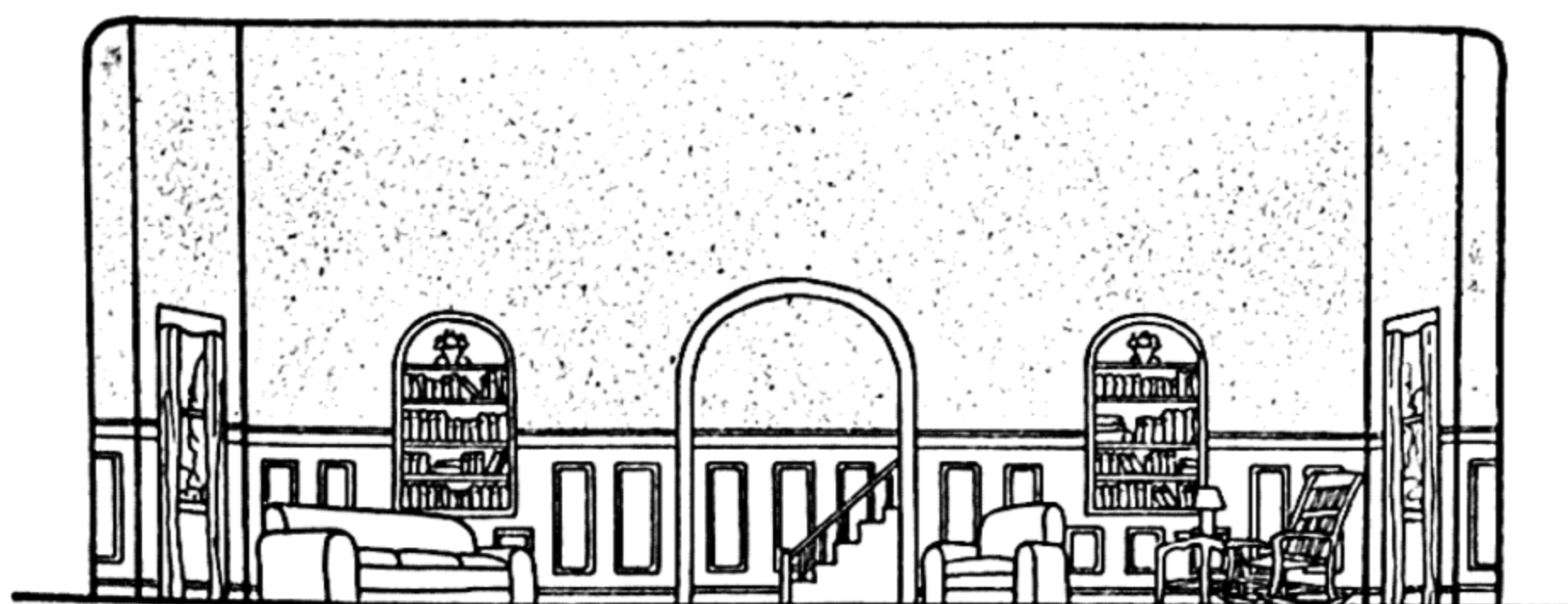
Grandma. Old-age foundation grease paint on face, neck, and hands. Hollows in cheeks and under eyes (dark gray). Wrinkles in forehead, around eyes, on each side of nose, around mouth, on chin and neck. Make lips thinner by partly block-



CYCLORAMA SETTING



CARDBOARD SETTING



COMPLETE FLAT SETTING

THE TARNISHED WITHERSPOONS



ing out with grease paint. Powder over all. Gray or white hair and eyebrows. Put hollows between knuckles of hands, highlight bones of hands, and put in wrinkles.

Grandpa. Same as Grandma's make-up on face, neck, and hands. Apply grease paint heavily to eyebrows, powder, and brush backwards to give bushy effect.

Margaret. Light grease paint on face and neck. Very few wrinkles around eyes, one or two wrinkles on forehead, perhaps a few around mouth. Small amount of rouge and lipstick. Slightly accentuate eyelashes and eyebrows. Light powder over all. Dress hair suitable to middle age.

Henry. Medium sallow foundation grease paint on face and neck. Few wrinkles around eyes and mouth. Deeper frown line on forehead. No rouge or lipstick. Slight gray touch at temples. Medium dark powder over all.

Helen. Light juvenile foundation grease paint on face and neck. Rouge and lipstick to harmonize with hair coloring. Blue eye shadow on upper lids. Eyelashes and eyebrows accentuated with black or brown. Enlarge eyes by drawing black or brown line on edge of upper lid from inner corner to quarter of an inch beyond outer corner. Draw line on lower lid beginning halfway from inner corner to beyond outer corner.

Charles. Medium light foundation on face and neck. Very slight, almost negligible, touch of rouge and lipstick. Eyes may be very slightly accentuated. Medium light powder over all (avoid too light a powder). Enlarge eyes, if necessary, as described in make-up for Helen.



GRANDPA



GRANDMA

THE TARNISHED
WITHERSPOONS



HENRY



MARGARET



CHARLES



HELEN

MAKEUP

The Tarnished Witherspoons

A Farce in One Act

CHARACTERS

Grandma Witherspoon. A gentle, sweet little old lady whose faculties of perception, humor, and understanding have not been dimmed by her seventy years of life.

Grandpa Witherspoon. A chipper little old man who enjoys life, has definitely his own ideas about things, and is not bothered by the modern developments going on around him.

Margaret Witherspoon. A modern mother and housewife whose natural tendencies have been twisted into ambitious dreams of social culture and prestige for herself and family.

Henry Witherspoon. A pompous, easily agitated businessman who likes to play the role of dignified and righteous head of the family.

Helen Witherspoon. The high-school-age daughter, a wholesome, fun-loving, affectionate girl whose lively individuality rebels at the falsity of pretentious culture.

Charles Witherspoon. An eager, enthusiastic youngster, slightly younger than his sister Helen. As an active, normal boy, Charles and his frank nature are often out of tune with his mother's social aspirations and cultural cupidity.

THE TIME: *Today*

The scene is laid in the living room of the Witherspoon home in a typical Middle Western small town. The room is comfortably furnished but ornamented with touches of attempted culture. Copies of paintings, such as Whistler's "Mother," "Blue Boy," "Cavalier," and perhaps "Mona Lisa," are tastefully arranged on the walls. Reproductions of other works of art in the forms of vases, small statuary, and nicely bound books are in evidence on tables and bookshelves.

The only note of slight incongruity in the room is the low, old-fashioned, sagging rocking chair which is placed down L. Beside it is a small table on which is a knitting basket. Not far from the rocker, up L but nearer the center, is a large, handsome, overstuffed chair with a removable seat cushion. Down R is a comfortable, rich-looking davenport.

There is a wide door, center back, from which a stairway goes up L, a hallway to the R leading to the front door, and a hallway to the L to the kitchen.

Grandma sits rocking back and forth in her chair down L. She is knitting, and her needles move in a careful, laborious manner as she peers over them at an open book of directions outspread on her knees. She accompanies her knitting movements with a rendition of "In the Gloaming," which she sings in a sweet, quavering, cackling little voice.

GRANDMA. "In the gloaming, oh, my darling" [*She stops suddenly, peers at the book, then studies her knitting*]. "In the gloaming, oh, my ——" [*She stops again, looks at the book and reads aloud carefully*]. "Drop one, purl two, drop one, purl two and repeat." [*sighs*] Dearie me, now I'm afraid that does look whopper-jawed. [*She holds up her knitting and studies it, then resumes rocking and knitting. She also resumes her singing, but this time the words become her knitting directions*]. "In the gloaming, dro-op one, pur-l two-o and repeat." [*Again she stops to look at her work, then at the book. She shakes her head and sighs*]. *New and Nifty Knitting*. Gracious, after all these years I've come to knitting from a book. [*She leafs through it*]. And not a single recipe in here for knitting a good sensible suit of winter underwear. Oh, dear! [*She turns back to her page of directions again*]. Drop two, purl one. Hum, now I wonder — [*looks cautiously toward door*] if anybody'd mind if I just went back to my own way. [*She slips the book behind her, leans back, and happily takes up her knitting, this time bursting into fresh song as her needles fly back and forth in an experienced manner*].

GRANDPA *cautiously descends stairs; reaching the door, he looks carefully up and down the hall, then into the room at GRANDMA.*

GRANDPA. [*in a loud whisper*] Ma! Ma!

GRANDMA *stops her rocking and knitting and looks at him in surprise.*

GRANDPA. [*coming cautiously into the room*] Is anybody around?

GRANDMA. Why, no, Pa, just me. Whatever is the matter?

GRANDPA. [*tiptoeing over to her, holding something behind his back, stands down L near her chair*] Where's Maggie?

GRANDMA. Gone out, I hope. [*puts knitting on table and says, gently reproving*] Pa, have you been in the attic?

GRANDPA. [*grinning*] Yep, and I found it, too! [*He brings forth a worn book from behind him*].

GRANDMA. [*in delight*] Oh, Pa! How nice! [*suddenly worried*] But Pa, if Maggie finds out you been up in the attic —

GRANDPA. [*easing his inflexible bones into the armchair LC*] Yep, I know — if she finds out I been in the attic, there won't be no peace in this 'stablishment for the rest of my natural life. [*He finishes the seating of himself with a grunt*].

GRANDMA. [*She rises from her chair and reaches to brush his forehead with her apron*]. Here, let me get that cobweb.

GRANDPA. [*settles back and cackles to himself*] Golly! Thought I'd never get down outa there 'thout someone a-ketchin' me.

GRANDMA. [*reseating herself, says anxiously*] But Maggie'll take it away from us if she finds out.

GRANDPA. Land o' Goshen, it's ourn, ain't it? [*grumblingly*] Humph, it's a wonder we kin ever git near our own belongin's in this house, the way they allus spy on what we're doing.

GRANDMA. [*gently*] I know, Pa, but we must remember we hafta do what they want us to. Livin' in town with our children who's society ain't like livin' on the farm where we could do what we wanted.

GRANDPA. Don't I know it. [*mimics*] "Now, Pa, don't you dare go rummagin' around in that attic! You get things all messed up. The Elite Bridge Club is gonna meet here this afternoon and everything must be in puffed order!"

GRANDMA. Now, Pa. You know you did mess it up a bit when you stumbled up there and run your leg through the ceiling — and the plaster fallin' down on all the members of Maggie's Lit'rary Society.

They both chuckle mirthfully.

GRANDPA. [*slapping his knee*] Holy gee! And wuz Maggie rarin'!

GRANDMA. Well, it wuz kinda bad, Maggie bein', as she says, the leader of the — what's she call it? — the four hundreds.

GRANDPA. [*in disgust*] Yep, and the Witherspoons bein' the best family in town — we gotta keep up appearances! Tommyrot! Takin' away my nightshirt and makin' me wear them durned peejamy pants to sleep in!

GRANDMA. Now, Pa, don't fuss. Anyway, we got somethin' to enjoy now that we got this in our hands again.

GRANDPA. Yep, that's right. Got it safe in our hands now and they ain't gonna find out about it neither. [*He strokes the book possessively*].

GRANDMA. [*again worried*] You sure that's it, Pa? It's been so long —

GRANDPA. Yep, it's it all right. [*eagerly*] Come on, Ma, let's look. [*GRANDMA hunches her chair nearer and peers over her glasses*]. Well, bless my soul, Ma, looky here at this!

VOICE OFF STAGE. Father! Father! Where are you?

GRANDPA. [*shutting book quickly*] Land o' Goshen, it's Maggie!

GRANDMA. Oh, Pa, quick! What'll we do?

GRANDPA. [*getting up and looking around helplessly*] We got to hide this and hide it purty quick.

VOICE. [*coming nearer*] Father! Father! Answer me!

GRANDMA. [*rising*] Quick, Pa, she's coming!

GRANDPA. [*trotting around excitedly*] Lemme see, now, lemme see.

GRANDMA. I know, Pa, there — under the cushion. [*She points to the overstuffed chair in which he has been sitting*].

GRANDPA. Sure enough. [*He tucks the book under the cushion. GRANDMA hurries to sit again in her rocking chair, grabs her knitting, and begins to knit and rock furiously, singing as lustily as her cracked voice will permit*].

VOICE. [*just outside door*] Father!

GRANDPA. Here I am, Maggie, here I am. [*He is patting the cushion into place as MARGARET appears in the doorway from kitchen and stands sternly watching him*].

MARGARET. What are you doing with that cushion, Father? [*GRANDPA wheels around; GRANDMA lets her song die down to hear what is going on, but continues to hum and knit in a halfhearted manner, watching the scene over her glasses*].

GRANDPA. [*innocently*] Cushion? What cushion? Oh, why

nothin', Maggie, ain't doin' a thing — er, just redding the place up a bit. [*Industriously but ineffectively he pretends to straighten the cushion*]. That's all, Maggie.

MARGARET. [*coming haughtily into the room*] How many times have I told you NOT to call me Maggie? You must learn to call me Margaret. Remember, Father, we're Witherspoons.

GRANDPA. Can't say as I see nothin' wrong with Maggie. It's a good, sensible name. Maybe not quite so highfalutin' as —

MARGARET. [*catching sight of his dusty shoes*] Father, you've been up in the attic again! [GRANDMA *hurriedly begins to sing lustily*. MARGARET *glares at her, then goes on accusingly to GRANDPA*]. I said you'd been up in the attic again and — Mother, please! [GRANDMA *subsides and MARGARET turns again to GRANDPA, who is dusting his shoes off on his trouser legs*]. You know very well that I've forbidden you to go messing things about up there.

GRANDPA. Aw, now, Maggie, I mean Margaret, I wasn't doin' nothin' —

MARGARET. Don't you deny it, Father; I heard you sneaking down the attic stairs. What were you after?

GRANDPA. [*suddenly hard of hearing*] Eh?

MARGARET. [*tapping her foot in annoyance*] You heard me.

GRANDPA. After? I wasn't after nothin'. I, ah, I just —

MARGARET. [*sighs in despair and sinks on the davenport R*] Don't argue! Do you want to bring on one of my nervous spells again? Oh, dear!

GRANDMA. [*eagerly*] Maybe you better go take one of them headache pills right now —

MARGARET. [*witheringly*] I will not! [*sternly to GRAMP*] Now you march right out and get the dust mop and clean up your dusty footmarks!

GRANDPA. [*looking around for something to do*] Do I haf to do it right now? I wuz just gonna —

MARGARET. Right now!

GRANDMA. I'll do it for you, Pa. You better rest. [*She rises*].

MARGARET. You'll do nothing of the sort. [GRANDMA *sits again, meekly*]. And another thing, Henry says he has invited Judge and Mrs. Otis to dinner tonight. Now, I want every-

thing in perfect order, everything! They belong in the very nicest set.

GRANDPA. Land o' Goshen, I reckon I'll have to put on a coat to hide my gallusses.

MARGARET. You certainly will. And, Father, don't tell any of your wild stories at dinner again. Judge Otis is one of Henry's most influential friends, and —

GRANDMA. Otis? Oh, yes; is he the fat gentleman who chews tobacco?

MARGARET. [*gives her a look, then turns to GRAMP*] I said no tall stories! The conversation will be on culture. Besides, it's bad for the children to hear you carrying on like that.

GRANDPA. [*chuckling*] Oh, the kids like my stories. Charles kin tell 'em most as tall as mine —

GRANDMA. Goodness, yes.

GRANDPA. And Helen thinks nobody's as good on jokes as her old Gramp. Say, Maggie, did you hear that one about —

MARGARET. [*rising*] That will do, Father. Go get the dust mop!

GRANDPA. [*giving the cushions a final vicious shove*] I'm a'goin', ain't I? [*He exits, looking back at the chair. GRANDMA watches him anxiously*].

MARGARET. [*irritably, arranging the cushions on the davenport*] I won't have him clumping around in that attic and dragging dust down here on my good Orientals! And I've just had spring house cleaning, too!

GRANDMA. [*edging over carefully and easing herself into the overstuffed chair*] Hum, it looks as if it might rain today.

MARGARET. [*turns and looks at GRANDMA*] It certainly does not. Now why are you sitting in that chair? [*points to rocker*] You know I allow that old thing in here merely because you like to sit in it.

GRANDMA. [*looks down at the chair in innocent surprise*] Well, dearie me, I just didn't notice which chair I was sitting in.

MARGARET. [*sighs as she crosses down L by GRANDMA's rocker to pick up a ball of yarn that GRANDMA has left trailing on the floor*] Oh, I suppose it doesn't matter. [*She dusts the table, then arranges GRANDMA's chair, picking up the knitting book*]. I'm glad to see you're going on with *New and Nifty Knitting*. Have you finished lesson number three?

GRANDMA. Oh, yes, I'm a good sight past number three.

MARGARET. Well, you put it away now and go up to your room for your nap.

GRANDMA. Land, Maggie, do I have to take a nap again today? I'm no more sleepy than a jack rabbit. I'll jest set here for a spell.

MARGARET. Mother, you must learn to take your afternoon nap. I want you to look fresh at dinner tonight. Now run along.

GRANDMA. Well, if you think it's needful for me but — [*She rises hesitatingly, reaches down and furtively pats the cushion, watching MARGARET out of the corner of her eye*].

MARGARET. What is the matter with that cushion? You and Father both —

GRANDMA. [*quickly straightens up*] Nothin', nothin' a tall, jest a-straightenin' it a bit.

MARGARET. Well, never mind it now. Run along and have a nice nap.

GRANDMA. [*puts her knitting on the table and starts out*] Yes, I'm sure I will. [*She starts humming abstractedly, looking back longingly at the chair as she exits upstairs*].

MARGARET. [*sighing, tidies up GRANDMA's knitting, straightens the rocker, and steps back to take a look at the room. Her eye falls on the overstuffed chair. She goes to it, puzzled, looks at the door through which GRANDMA has just gone. She straightens cushion, then, as if on an impulse, pulls up the cushion and sees the scrapbook. She takes a look at it, shrugs her shoulders, and starts to throw it on the table. Then she aimlessly leafs through it. Suddenly she is electrified, her eyes glued to a page. She lets out a gasp, then a moan; she sinks into the chair and reads with a horrified look on her face. She bursts into tears, then sobs, and begins to call*]. Henry! Henry! Oh, dear, I mustn't faint now. Henry! Henry! Oh! Oh! [*Each call is louder and more anguished. She continues moaning softly until HENRY appears in doorway*].

HENRY. [*as he enters, not noticing her heaving shoulders*] Did you want me, Margaret dear? [*As her outburst breaks, he rushes toward her*]. Why, Margaret!

MARGARET. [*rises, scrapbook falling to the floor, turns to him, wringing her hands*] Oh, Henry! Henry!

HENRY. Margaret, what on earth is the matter? Has something happened? [*She utters a moan and starts to faint. He rushes to catch her and helps her to davenport where she sits on down-stage end, HENRY on her left*]. Margaret dear, here, sit down, dear. [*fans her with his hand as he looks around for something more effective with which to revive her*] What is it, Margaret?

MARGARET. [*with a woeful expression*] Oh, Henry, something terrible, something terrible — [*She bursts into wailing*].

HENRY. Quick, Margaret, what is the matter? [*sees scrap-book on floor, rushes over, picks it up, and returns to fan her with it*] There, there, Margaret. [*MARGARET sees the scrapbook, pushes it away in horror*].

MARGARET. Henry! [*gulps down a sob*] Your father — [*She wails again*].

HENRY. Pa? What's the matter with him?

MARGARET. Oh, Henry, we'll never live this down, never. [*Her sentence ends in another wail, louder this time*].

HENRY. Now, Margaret, remember your nervous spells! What's Pa done?

MARGARET. What's he done? [*This sets her off on a new wail*].

HENRY. Margaret, please!

MARGARET. [*her wailing subsiding long enough for her to take on an indignant attitude*] I can't tell what he's done, but, here, [*points at book*] read that.

HENRY. [*looks at it, says matter-of-factly*] Hum, what's this? Just an old book.

MARGARET. [*significantly*] His old scrapbook.

HENRY. [*a bit irritably*] Yes, I can see that it is. What's so terrible about that?

MARGARET. [*tearfully ominous*] You'll see. [*She rises and goes to HENRY, who is standing down center. She turns to a certain page for him*]. Here, read that!

HENRY. [*walks down L reading aloud in a mumbling tone, the words not understandable to the audience. He stops suddenly, looks up quickly*]. Good Lord! [*He reads again, more closely, mumbling faster and faster. Then he shuts the book quickly*]. Good heavens! It can't be true! [*He mops his brow with handkerchief from coat pocket, then turns and crosses to MARGARET*]. Margaret, where did this come from?

MARGARET. He hid it — [*goes to armchair, sniffing and dabbing eyes*] in this chair.

HENRY. Hum! Does he know you found it?

MARGARET. [*grimly*] No, not yet! [*weeps again as she sits on arm of chair*] Oh, Henry, isn't it terrible?

HENRY. Heavens! This is serious. Where has this been all these years? Why didn't we find it out before?

MARGARET. He must have concealed it in the attic. That's why he was always snooping around up there. He sneaked up there this afternoon and got it.

HENRY. Well, I'll be —

MARGARET. Henry, I knew he'd been hiding something from us all these years, and now we've found out. [*Her voice rises to a wail*].

HENRY. [*coming to pat her shoulder anxiously*] There, there, Margaret!

MARGARET. [*never letting up on her wail*] To think this had to happen to us, the Witherspoons!

HENRY. [*mops his brow again, opens the book and reads in incredulity*] "Notorious Horse Thief Caught Red-handed." [*This brings a louder, fresh wail from MARGARET*]. Now, Margaret, you must be calm. [*He reads on*]. "John Witherspoon, supposedly law-abiding citizen, apprehended in the dastardly act of stealing Squire Jones' prize gray mare." [*MARGARET lets out another wail*].

HENRY. [*stunned*] John Witherspoon! — That's Pa, all right.

MARGARET. [*her wails subsiding to sniffles*] Oh, it's horrible; I just can't stand it, Henry.

HENRY. [*dumfounded*] My father a horse thief! [*MARGARET emits a new wail*]. Now, Margaret, get hold of yourself. We must face this thing squarely. [*He nervously paces the floor, in front of davenport, mopping his brow, and it is evident that he needs to get hold of himself*].

MARGARET. [*gulping tearfully*] Do you suppose anyone else knows of this?

HENRY. [*turns to her aghast*] Good heavens, I hope not!

MARGARET. Surely Mama does.

HENRY. I suppose so — yes, Mama does, of course. Look,

it says: [*He reads from the book*]. "on his wedding day, making his getaway with his innocent young bride of a few hours." [*closes the book in horrified awe*] He and Mama just married!

MARGARET. [*in righteous sadness*] Your poor mother! Imagine finding out on your wedding night that you'd married a horse thief! [*She shudders*].

HENRY. [*lifting his eyes heavenward*] And she's lived with him all these years, bearing her disgrace in silence.

MARGARET. And holding up so bravely all the time. Why, to look at her, you'd never know she had such a terrible secret buried in her soul.

HENRY. [*shaking his head sadly, starts his pacing again*] How it must have preyed on her mind.

MARGARET. [*who has been dabbing her eyes, is electrified by this*] Yes, it must have preyed on her mind. Henry, do you remember how she hated that horsehair sofa we used to have?

HENRY. [*unperturbed*] Why, yes, I remember she couldn't stand having it around.

MARGARET. [*as if piling evidence on evidence*] And do you remember how she used to argue to keep Grandpa away from the races at the county fair?

HENRY. [*beginning to be worried*] Why, yes. I remember he had a passion for them.

MARGARET. [*gasping*] Oh, Henry, don't you see? [*She wails and drops into the armchair*].

HENRY. [*Dawn breaks and stuns him*]. Well, I'll be — [*He drops on davenport*].

MARGARET. [*rocking herself in misery*] Oh, why didn't he destroy this damning evidence years ago instead of letting it crop up now to ruin our lives?

HENRY. I suppose he thought we'd never find it. But you know, Margaret, they say even the most perfect criminal always slips sometime or other.

MARGARET. [*sobbing*] Henry, what are we going to do?

HENRY. [*sadly shaking his head*] I don't know, Margaret.

MARGARET. If this ever gets out, we're ruined, positively ruined!

HENRY. [*gloomily*] Yes, and me president of Rotary Club, too.

MARGARET. [*sniffing*] Now I can never be elected to the D.A.R.; they always look up family history.

HENRY. And I'll have to drop out of the Bar Association. Me, Henry Witherspoon, the most prominent lawyer in town.

MARGARET. [*her voice rising in an indignant wail*] Imagine my Monday Literary Club hearing of this. Oh, Oh!

HENRY. [*interrupting her wailing*] Margaret, now, Margaret, restrain yourself.

MARGARET. Henry, we'll never be able to hold our heads up socially again.

HENRY. Not if anyone finds out about this.

MARGARET. Oh, dear, oh, dear!

HENRY. [*grimly*] Listen, Margaret; we must keep this thing a secret, guard it with our lives.

MARGARET. Yes, Henry, our whole future depends on that, and the future of the children too.

HENRY. Yes, the children, what about them?

MARGARET. [*weeping softly*] Poor Charles and Helen!

HENRY. [*decisively*] Well, they must be told about this, Margaret.

MARGARET. [*in horror*] Oh, no, Henry, never!

HENRY. Yes, we must tell them. It wouldn't be fair not to.

MARGARET. [*stops wailing*] Maybe you're right. It wouldn't be fair to let them go on thinking their grandfather is such an ideal. They worship him now.

HENRY. We've got to shatter that ideal.

MARGARET. [*sniffing again*] And I so wanted to send Helen to a finishing school. But she's too sensitive. She wouldn't go now and mingle with those proud, cultured girls, not when she knows her grandfather is a — [*She lowers her voice and finishes in revulsion*] horse thief!

HENRY. Poor little Helen! She'll take this hard.

MARGARET. And Charles! [*This thought brings on a fresh wail*]. I always said he was a real Witherspoon.

HENRY. I'd planned a law career for him, maybe to go into practice with me when he's out of law school.

MARGARET. Now he'll probably want to change his name and go far away from here and away from his grandfather.

HENRY. [*rising and looking into space at an imaginary sign*] And

I had dreamed of "Witherspoon and Witherspoon, Attorneys-at-law."

MARGARET. [*sadly*] Yes, like father, like son.

HENRY. [*repeating sadly*] Like father, like son. [*looks up suddenly, horror on his face*] Good Lord, Margaret, [*gulps*] do you think this terrible thing might be inherited — I mean Pa's being a horse thief — and affect my life or Charles'?

MARGARET. [*whimpering*] Oh, Henry, how awful! I hadn't thought of that!

HENRY. [*turns slowly away*] Like father, like son. [*He gulps again, then turns and faces her as if waiting for a verdict*]. Margaret, did you ever notice any trace of this — er — this horse thief strain in me?

MARGARET. [*quickly and soothingly*] Why, no, Henry, of course not. [*HENRY breathes a sigh of relief and sits on the davenport again, mopping his brow*]. But wait! [*rises*] Henry, [*She lowers her voice in fright*] do you remember your fascination for — hobby horses?

HENRY. [*jumping up*] Good Lord!

MARGARET. [*persistently*] You always gave Charles one on every birthday and every Christmas.

HENRY. [*stunned*] That's right. I couldn't resist buying them.

MARGARET. [*shudders*] Well, [*sits again*] at least you didn't steal them — [*Struck by the possibility that he might have, she finishes tremulously*] or did you? [*HENRY gives her an injured look; she sees her mistake and hurries on*]. I've never noticed anything about Charles or Helen that might be attributed to a horse-thieving strain.

HENRY. [*walking back and forth in front of davenport*] No, but, of course, it might crop out later. [*mops his brow feverishly*] But surely there isn't any danger. It would have come before now.

MARGARET. I hope so. I mean — oh dear! My nerves are shattered, positively shattered!

HENRY. And we must decide what we will do with Father and Mother.

MARGARET. I'm afraid, Henry, we'll have to send them away. We can't have them in the house with the children.

[*sound of door closing*] Listen, was that the front door? [*She jumps up*].

HENRY. Yes. [*goes to door and furtively looks out R*] It's Helen. We must hide this thing! [*He holds the book helplessly*].

MARGARET. [*starts to whimper*] Oh dear, oh dear! Yes, hide it, quickly! [*They both look for a place to hide it. She starts for the davenport, he for the chair. They bump into each other all the while. MARGARET is whimpering and HENRY is muttering "Good heavens, good heavens!" They finally get the book under the chair cushion*].

MARGARET. [*crossing to GRANDMA'S rocker, sits*] Oh, Henry, I can't face her. You'll have to be the one to tell her the awful truth.

HENRY. [*pacing back and forth between the davenport and chair*] Poor little sensitive Helen!

MARGARET. This will break her, Henry. I can just see her pitiful little face when she learns that her beloved grandfather was a — oh! [*She bursts into wails again*].

HENRY. [*crossing C to MARGARET, down L*] There, there, dear. [*turns front, draws himself up*] I shall be the one to tell her, Margaret. As head of this family, I see my duty, and I will not flinch, no matter how unpleasant it may be.

MARGARET. [*turning and looking up at him admiringly through her tears*] You're so strong, Henry, so comforting in this hour of trouble.

HENRY. [*magnificently*] I do my best, dear.

MARGARET. Be gentle with Helen, Henry. Remember, she's just a tender little flower. [*She sniffs audibly*].

HENRY. [*crossing to davenport, down R, and sits*] And we have always sheltered her from such horrible things as this, which I must tell her in cold truth! [*MARGARET whimpers*].

HELEN. [*sauntering in, pulling off her hat*] 'Lo, Mother. Hi, Pops, old boy, how's tricks? [*She comes down RC to davenport and sits on upstage arm*].

HENRY. [*tragically*] Sometimes tricks of fate can cause us much grief, Helen.

HELEN. [*grinning and rumpling his hair*] You memorizing a speech or something?

MARGARET. [*rising*] Helen, my poor child, we — oh — [*She bursts into weeping and sits again*].

HELEN. [*in astonishment, comes C*] Say, what is all this about? [*suddenly*] I'll bet I know. Somebody told you about Charles!

HENRY AND MARGARET. Charles?

HELEN. Oh, gee, Pop, why can't Charles have that horse?

HENRY AND MARGARET. What — what did you say? Horse!

HELEN. It's just an old nag and the garbage man said he could have it for nothing. You can still ride it, and, oh, gee, Charles wants that horse more than anything in the world.

HENRY. [*rises stiffly*] Did you say Charles wants a — a horse?

MARGARET. [*rises*] Henry, I am going to faint. [*No one pays any attention to her, so she sinks down weakly in GRANDMA'S rocking chair*].

HENRY. So Charles wants a horse! [*He turns away, dazed. MARGARET whimpers softly and rocks herself*].

HELEN. [*standing at C*] Oh, gosh, what's so awful about Charles wanting a horse?

HENRY. [*dazed*] Then it's happened — like father, like son.

HELEN. [*coming down R towards her father*] What's the matter, Pop, is your stomach acting up again?

HENRY. [*repeating dully*] Charles wants a horse!

MARGARET. [*weeping*] This is more than I can bear.

HELEN. [*going to overstuffed chair and flopping disgustedly*] Well, why the undertaker's pan? You oughta be glad it's a horse he wants and not an elephant. Imagine footing the hay bills for an elephant!

HENRY. [*turning to her sternly*] Stop being flippant, Helen.

MARGARET. This is no joking matter.

HELEN. Oh, well, he probably knows he wouldn't get to keep it anyway. We never get to do anything around this house. We're too busy trying to remember we're Witherspoons — spotless, upstanding Witherspoons.

MARGARET. Oh! Oh! [*She starts weeping again*].

HENRY. [*marching to R side of armchair*] Helen, I have something very serious, very, very serious to tell you. [*He clears his throat, mops his brow*].

MARGARET. [*tremulously*] Go on, Henry, you must tell her.

HENRY. Well, it's about our family.

HELEN. [*grinning impishly*] What is it, Pop, a new brother or new sister?

HENRY. [*shocked*] Helen, please!

MARGARET. [*rises*] Now I am going to faint!

HELEN. Oh, I'm sorry.

MARGARET *sits again*.

HENRY. This is — ah, this is about your grandfather.

HELEN. [*jumps up from chair*] Gramp? He's not sick, is he, Dad?

HENRY. [*grimly*] No, Helen, he's not sick!

MARGARET. [*insinuatingly*] No, he's not sick!

HELEN. Whew! [*She sits again*]. I'm glad of that. Gosh, I don't know what Charles and I would do if anything happened to Gramp!

HENRY. Your grandfather does not merit such affection from you, Helen.

MARGARET. [*indignantly*] He certainly does not!

HELEN. Are you both trying to kid me or something?

HENRY. We were never more serious. We know how fond you are of him.

HELEN. Fond? Gee, he's the only one in this house who understands Charles and me.

MARGARET. How can you say that, to me, your mother! [*She weeps*].

HELEN. [*doggedly*] Well, he is. I'll bet he'd understand this horse business. He'd let Charles keep it.

MARGARET. He probably would!

HENRY. I'm sorry to be the one to shatter your illusion about your grandfather. You must take this calmly, Helen. [*He twists his handkerchief and is anything but calm himself*].

HELEN. [*leaning back in resignation*] Well, shoot the works, if it'll make you feel better.

MARGARET. You must be brave, Helen dear. Go on, Henry.

HENRY. [*hesitates, clears his throat, then says slowly and determinedly*] Helen, your grandfather was a horse thief.

HELEN. [*calmly*] Say, your stomach trouble's gone to your head. Come on, talk sense.

MARGARET. [*weeping softly*] My poor, poor child!

HENRY. I knew it would be hard for you to comprehend, but you must grasp this — your grandfather was a horse thief!

HELEN. [*sitting up straight and looking at him squarely*] I don't believe you!

MARGARET. The poor child can't imagine such an awful thing!

HENRY. [*sadly, but nobly*] Then I must convince her. Helen, you shall read the terrible fact for yourself. Get up.

HELEN. [*rising and looking at him in a puzzled manner*] Well, what on earth?

HENRY. [*takes scrapbook from under cushion. HELEN stands at L of the chair, watching him*]. Your grandfather thinks he hid this safely. [*He opens book, finds the page, and hands it to her*]. I know this is cruel, but you must know about it. [*HELEN takes the book, gives him a puzzled look, then crosses to davenport and reads. HENRY looks at her compassionately, then goes to MARGARET's chair and stands behind her, his hand comfortingly on her shoulder*].

HELEN. [*staring at the book*] Dad! Dad, is this true?

MARGARET. [*turns away, dabbing her eyes*] Poor sensitive little Helen!

HENRY. I'm afraid it is, my child. [*turns his head and blows his nose violently*] Your mother and I thought you ought to know.

HELEN. [*looking up from the book, her face radiant*] Oh, it's marvelous! Simply marvelous!

HENRY. [*turns to her, astonished*] What — what did you say?

MARGARET. [*anxiously*] The shock has been too much for her!

HELEN. [*jumps up excitedly*] I said it was marvelous! This! [*She hugs the book to her*]. Oh, boy, three cheers for Gramp! [*She takes a little excited skip down RC*].

HENRY. [*soothingly*] There, there, Helen, don't get hysterical. [*He takes a step toward her*].

HELEN. [*turning to face them, beaming*] Oh, I'm thrilled to death! I always hoped we had a skeleton in our family closet, but I never imagined one this good!

HENRY. [*shocked*] Helen!

MARGARET. [*rises from the rocking chair, sways*] I really am going to faint this time!

She starts to go limp; HENRY rushes to catch her and half carries and half drags her to the davenport, down R, excitedly talking all the while.

HENRY. Margaret, dear! There, there, Margaret, hold up now! There, there. [*He deposits her on the davenport*]. Quick, get a fan, get her smelling salts, get something. Oh, heavens! Margaret, Margaret dear, speak to me! It's all right; I'm here, dear. [*He kneels beside her, fanning her frantically. Suddenly he turns and glares at HELEN, who has stepped back and leans on the overstuffed chair, watching the scene calmly*]. Now see what you've done to your poor mother! She's fainted dead away.

HELEN. [*calmly*] Oh, no she hasn't. She's just practicing her old Witherspoon swoon. She hasn't really fainted.

MARGARET. [*indignantly sitting erect*] I have too fainted! Oh, what an awful thing to say to your poor mother. [*She falls back limp again*].

HENRY. Oh, dear, she's fainted again! Come now, Margaret, you'll be all right! [*MARGARET sits up, moaning. HENRY gets up from his knees, stands at upstage end of davenport*]. Helen, I can't believe you realize what you've been saying about all this. Do you understand that this scandal of your grandfather's is a terrible blot on the Witherspoon family?

HELEN. Sure I do, and I'm tickled pink. We've always been so darn perfect that we couldn't even live normally for fear of marring the Witherspoon family record. [*sits down defiantly in armchair*] Well, I'm glad there's one person in this family who had enough get-up-and-go about him to do what he felt like doing.

MARGARET. Henry, I can't stand it another minute. Our proud family name has been disgraced, yet she stands there and — oh — oh! [*She bursts into weeping*].

HENRY. [*hurrying to pat her on the shoulder*] There, there, Margaret dear. Now, you go up to your room and lie down. Just let me handle this. I'll talk to Helen alone and bring her to her senses. [*He helps MARGARET rise from the davenport*].

MARGARET. Oh, Henry, this is too much to bear, it's too — [*She bursts into fresh wails as she totters toward the door, HENRY helping her*].

HELEN. [*following them, says contritely*] I am sorry, Mother, but I can't help being glad about it when — [*This brings a loud, fresh wail from MARGARET, who exits, leaving HENRY remaining at the door to watch her go upstairs. The wails continue to get fainter*].

HENRY. [*marching back to C, sternly faces HELEN, who has moved down R to davenport where she has been eagerly looking at the scrap-book again*] Helen, I can't imagine what's got into you.

HELEN. [*takes a step toward him, pleadingly*] Dad, please try to understand. We've lived in a glass house for so long that we're just a family of mechanical social lions. There isn't anything natural about us, we're just a sham. Charles and I want to be real, human, like other kids.

HENRY. You don't know what you're talking about.

HELEN. Yes, I do, Dad. Just because we're Witherspoons, we've been made to act like young angels with haloes, when we've felt more like normal, honest-to-goodness human beings. Don't you see? Gramp's being a horse thief has broken the darned old glass house! We don't have to pretend any more — we —

HENRY. That's all nonsense. Your grandfather's crime —

HELEN. Grandfather's crime! Don't be so Victorian. Where is Gramp? I want to give him a big hug. [*She starts toward door*].

HENRY. [*hurriedly stepping in her path, says sternly*] Don't you go near your grandfather. If you refuse to take this thing seriously, [*disgustedly, HELEN turns away*] there's nothing I can do except forbid you to see your grandfather. You must realize what a terrible thing he has done to us.

HELEN. Oh, Dad, what's so awfully wrong about —

HENRY. [*grimly emphatic sits in armchair*] And this thing must be kept a secret. I'll never be able to face the town if it gets out, do you hear? [*His voice has risen on the last*].

HELEN. [*resignedly*] Yes, I hear. [*She sits despondently on arm of davenport*].

HENRY. Charles will have to know, but after that, you must never breathe a word of it.

HELEN. Can't I even see Gramp?

HENRY. [*shaking his finger at her angrily*] You stay away from your grandfather! He isn't fit to associate with. [*tucks his handkerchief in his pocket with a determined flourish*] Your mother and I will settle with him.

HELEN. [*frightened, rises*] Pop, you wouldn't do anything to Gramp?

HENRY. [*righteously*] He has blighted the Witherspoon name, and I must do my duty.

HELEN. And I suppose poor little Grandma's poisonous too because she's married to our horse thief grandfather.

HENRY. Your grandmother has willfully concealed this disgrace from us all these years.

HELEN. It wasn't willful. She was just trying to save you the unpleasant rumpus that she knew would come if she told it. I think it's cruel of you to blame two lovable old people like Gramp and Grandma for something that —

HENRY. [*rising and silencing her*] Helen! Now I'll leave you until you come to your senses. I must go to your poor mother. This thing has crushed her.

HELEN. Just crushed her social props.

HENRY. She needs all the strength and comfort I can give her. [*He walks nobly towards door*].

HELEN. [*under her breath as she crosses to GRANDMA'S rocker and aimlessly starts it rocking*] She would!

HENRY. [*on first step of stairs turns quickly*] What's that?

HELEN. [*innocently*] Oh, nothing, Pop. [*excitedly, as voice is heard off stage, singing jauntily*] Oh, here comes Charles!

CHARLES. [*enters breezily singing*] "Horses! Horses!" [*as he passes his father in hall*] Hi, Pop! "Crazy over horses, horses —"

HENRY. [*horrified*] Charles, stop that!

CHARLES. Stop what?

HELEN. The song, Charles, the song! Pop doesn't like it.

HENRY. [*takes a step towards CHARLES, shakes his head sadly*] My boy, my poor boy! The curse of the family has fallen. [*Hand to eyes, he turns and exits upstairs. HELEN giggles; CHARLES goes as far as armchair and stares after him in amazement, letting out a low whistle*].

CHARLES. My gosh, Sis, what's wrong with the dignified head of the Witherspoon family?

HELEN. Charles, you're a genius for doing the wrong thing at the wrong time.

CHARLES. Now, what did I do? Is whistling going to be banned in this house from now on?

HELEN. I wouldn't be surprised. [*She sits in GRANDMA'S rocker*].

CHARLES. Well, what's up, anyway? [*He slides into overstuffed chair sideways and sits dangling his feet over the arm*].

HELEN. You'd never guess.

CHARLES. Bet I can. Dad's going to let me keep that horse!

HELEN. No. And you'd better not mention it to him either.

CHARLES. Oh, I supposed he'd have a fit about it. Wish I'd talked to Gramp first.

HELEN. That wouldn't have been so good either, considering what's happened now.

CHARLES. [*sitting erect*] What's happened now? Have we committed another social error? [*vehemently*] I'm about fed up with this house. We never get to do anything we want to.

HELEN. [*tantalizingly knowing*] Maybe it will be different from now on.

CHARLES. Huh! Not a chance. We'll go on being the model children of a model family. [*as if reciting an oft-heard lecture*] We're the Witherspoon children, offsprings of the oldest, most respected family in town. [*savagely*] We're so perfect it makes me sick! [*After the last few emphatic words, he falls back into the depths of the chair again, swinging his legs*].

HELEN. What would you say if I told you we had a blot on our family 'scutcheon, and a darn good blot too?

CHARLES. I'd say you were bats! [*sits up*] But you intrigue me, woman. [*twirls imaginary mustache*] Is there a possibility?

HELEN. [*rises from rocker, steps toward CHARLES excitedly*] It's Gramp! He's the blessed blot on the family name!

CHARLES. [*scoffingly*] Gramp? [*laughs*] You're kidding; Gramp's never done anything wrong.

HELEN. Well, brace yourself! [*crosses her arms, stands importantly*] Mother and Dad have just found out that Gramp Witherspoon was a horse thief! [*She finishes triumphantly, her eyes shining*].

CHARLES. [*incredulously*] Horse thief? Our Gramp a horse thief? Are you trying to hand me a laugh?

HELEN. [*seriously*] No, Charles, honest! [*looks around secretively, then gets scrapbook which she left lying on davenport*] Here, take a look at this. [*She opens the book, brings it to him, and stands looking over his shoulder as he reads*]. Isn't it just marvelous, Charles?

CHARLES. [*reading*] Well, I'll be — [*lets out a whoop*] Say, I always knew he was a regular fellow!

HELEN. [*beaming*] That's just what I said.

CHARLES. [*gazing at scrapbook*] Good old Gramp! [*suddenly getting up and turning towards HELEN*] Say, this ought to let us out of all this high-powered social campaigning Mother's started.

HELEN. Sure, that's the idea. Now that we've got a bent limb on the family tree, we won't have to pretend that a Witherspoon is always perfect.

CHARLES. [*posing effeminately*] Gosh, just think, no more dancing lessons.

They start jabbering excitedly.

HELEN. And no more sculpturing and art lectures for me!

CHARLES. Maybe now I can build that motor with Joe Burris. Mom wouldn't let me go around with him before because his dad's a factory hand.

HELEN. And maybe I can join the Zeta Club. Mother used to say it wasn't exclusive enough, because any high school girl can belong.

CHARLES. And I can go fishing with the garbage man. He's a swell guy, you know it? Givin' me that horse all for nothing!

HELEN. We'll have picnics here in the yard, and invite all the kids we know, no matter what their fathers do, and we'll never have another boring old tea or garden party — ever!

They take hands and swing around gaily yelling, "Whoopee!"

CHARLES. [*hopping on davenport, uses scrapbook for pillow*] Boy, oh, boy, we're going to be grateful to Gramp for life!

HELEN. [*gleefully*] I'll say. [*suddenly serious*] But Mother and Dad don't feel that way. They say we're [*mockingly aghast*] ruined socially. [*She sits in armchair*].

CHARLES. Is that so? Well, isn't that just too bad?

HELEN. [*shaking her head slowly in pretended sadness*] They think that the Witherspoons are tarnished permanently.

CHARLES. [*disgustedly*] Rats! I'll bet they were wild!

HELEN. Wild? It put Mother to bed.

CHARLES. It would! [*pauses, considers seriously*] But I suppose it is tough on them.

HELEN. But it'll be tougher on Gramp. They'll make it hot for him.

CHARLES. [*sitting up*] Why should they raise a rumpus with him about it? After all, it happened a long time ago, and he probably didn't mean to do it.

HELEN. Why, it's practically a joke, but try to get Mother and Dad to see it that way. They think Gramp's a criminal!

CHARLES. [*worried*] Gee, I don't want them to jump on Gramp!

HELEN. Sh! Isn't that Grandma coming? [*Sound of GRANDMA'S quavering "In the Gloaming" is heard off stage*].

HELEN. [*going to davenport and grabbing scrapbook*] Here, we got to put this away. She mustn't know we saw it. Gramp and Grandma think it's still hid, under that cushion.

CHARLES. Oh, I see — they hid it and Mother and Dad found it?

HELEN *starts to chair to put book underneath cushion but GRANDMA enters before she gets the cushion up. HELEN quickly puts book behind her.*

CHARLES. So I said to him, "Huh, I can lick you with one hand" — [*looks up in innocent surprise as GRANDMA enters*] Oh, hello, Grandma.

GRANDMA. [*startled, looks at them over her glasses*] Oh, you children here. I jest came down to look for my, ah, to look for a book. [*HELEN sidles over to davenport and slips scrapbook behind cushion*].

CHARLES AND HELEN. A book? [*They look at each other*].

GRANDMA. Why, yes. It was — [*She pauses uncertainly*]. It was my knitting book.

CHARLES AND HELEN. [*relieved*] Oh.

GRANDMA. [*starts to overstuffed chair*] Seems to me I left it in this chair somewheres.

HELEN. [*hurriedly*] Oh, no, Grandma, it's right over there, I'm sure, in your own chair.

CHARLES. [*rushing over to GRANDMA'S chair*] Here it is, Grandma, right here. [*He brings the knitting book to her*]. Here it is, Grandma. Is that all you wanted? [*He pushes her toward door*].

GRANDMA. Why, yes, to be sure. That's it. [*She stands*

hesitantly, looking at chair where scrapbook is supposed to be hidden]. My, that cushion is all mussed up! I better straighten it.

HELEN. [*rushing to chair and almost falling into it*] Oh, don't bother, Grandma, I was going to sit here anyway.

GRANDPA. [*at doorway*] Did you get our book, Ma? [*comes into room and sees CHARLES and HELEN*] I mean — well — hello, there, kids. Your Grandma and me was lookin' for — [*flounders in embarrassment*] we wuz lookin' for our checkbook, wuzn't we, Ma?

GRANDMA. [*edging next to him and nudging him from L*] No, Pa, it wuz my knitting book, don't you remember?

GRANDPA. [*catching on*] Oh, yes, yes, sure. That's what I meant. Your grandma's knitting me a — a horseblanket.

CHARLES AND HELEN. A what? [*They look at each other*].

GRANDPA. Well, Ma, we better go on back to our room.

GRANDMA. [*looking at armchair longingly*] Yes, I reckon we better.

CHARLES. [*going over to R of GRAMP*] Well, Gramp, and Grandma, too, whatever happens, you can count on me to stand by you.

HELEN. [*rising from overstuffed chair*] And me too. We'll never forget what you've done for us.

GRANDMA. [*bewildered*] Well, now, that is nice of you children.

GRANDPA. Land o' Goshen, you're a serious pair. Well, come on, Ma, we'd better git outa here before the young ones start lecturin' us about the facts of life. [*They exit*].

HELEN. [*sits slowly on arm of overstuffed chair*] They're grand old folks. Charles, we've got to stand by Gramp.

CHARLES. [*at davenport*] I'll say we do, no matter what the folks do to him.

HELEN. And they might do something desperate. This means a lot to them.

CHARLES. [*sits down suddenly*] Gee, they might make him leave here — you know, disown him or something.

HELEN. [*startled*] Gosh, Charles, we can't let anything like that happen.

CHARLES. But you know, you got to consider the folks' side of it, too.

HELEN. I suppose so. This is an awful blow to them, especially after they've tried so hard to really be somebody.

CHARLES. I guess they mean to do right. They blame Gramp for being a horse thief because they think it will ruin you and me.

HELEN. Yes, I see. Gee, this is a mess, after all.

CHARLES. And there's Grandma to think of. If she found out the folks knew this about Gramp — well, she'd just die!

HELEN. Grandma's so sweet. I couldn't bear to have her hurt. [*There is a dejected silence for a moment as the two sit in deep thought, sighing once or twice; then CHARLES jumps up with sudden inspiration*].

CHARLES. Say, I've got an idea! We can take care of Gramp and still make it right with the folks.

HELEN. Sounds impossible. But what is it?

CHARLES. Listen. Let's go to Mother and Dad and tell them that if they won't say anything or do anything to Gramp about his being a horse thief, that you and I'll do anything they want us to!

HELEN. That's practically signing away our life freedom.

CHARLES. [*eagerly*] We didn't have any, anyway. And if they won't do anything to Gramp, it will be worth it.

HELEN. [*catching his enthusiasm*] Sure, that'll fix everything! [*rises from chair, steps toward him*] It's a great idea, Charles. [*CHARLES draws himself up proudly*]. Now Gramp or Grandma will never know the folks found out about this at all.

CHARLES. [*gloomily*] Well, I'll have to give that horse back, darn it. [*sighs, then speaks bravely*] But I don't care, if it'll make them be nice to Gramp.

HELEN. And I'll go to a crazy highbrow finishing school, if Mother still wants me to, and take art, and music, and drama and —

CHARLES. And I guess I can make up my mind to be a lawyer, too. That's what Dad wants. If we gotta sacrifice to save Gramp, we might as well sacrifice down to the last drop.

HELEN. [*cheerfully*] But think what we're doing for Gramp and Grandma. Gee, Charles, let's go talk to Mother and Dad right now!

CHARLES. O.K.! [*They start toward door*]. Say, what about that scrapbook?

HELEN. Oh, we'd better put it back under the cushion; then Gramp and Grandma will never know that it's been touched. [*She gets the book from under the davenport cushion and puts it under overstuffed chair cushion*].

CHARLES. [*who has been waiting for her in the doorway*] Say, here come Gramp and Grandma back again. Gee, poor old souls, I'll bet they're afraid somebody has found their secret.

HELEN. [*coming to his side*] Let's duck out this way [*She points down hall R*] and let them find it in peace.

CHARLES. [*looking up stairway*] I feel so good to think we can do something to save them a lot of grief.

HELEN. And save the folks a lot of grief, too. You know, Charles, it takes the younger generation to figure out things. [*They pause in the doorway, nod solemnly, shake hands, and exit to the R*].

GRANDPA. [*entering from stairway*] Land o' Goshen, Ma, fer once we got the place to ourselves. Come on in, the coast is clear.

GRANDMA. [*following him in*] Let's get it out, quick, Pa. I jest been tremblin' for fear someone mighta found it.

GRANDPA. [*feels under cushion and brings out scrapbook*] Here 'tis, sure enough. Whew! I wuz kinda scared someone'd found it, too. But it ain't been touched.

GRANDMA. [*crossing L to sit in her rocker*] Thank goodness! Why, Pa, you know sure as you're livin' that Maggie'd burn it up if she found it.

GRANDPA. [*sitting in overstuffed chair*] Yep, jest like she did that seed corn I was savin' when we moved in from the farm.

GRANDMA. This is all we got left from the things we brung in from the homestead, Pa.

GRANDPA. Better pull your chair up a mite, Ma.

HELEN and CHARLES cross hallway and tiptoe upstairs.

GRANDMA. [*anxiously*] Do you suppose we can look at it, without someone comin' in on us? [*She hunches her chair over*].

GRANDPA. Reckon we can. Maggie and Henry's upstairs — I heard 'em raisin' a rumpus 'bout somethin' — can't imagine what.

GRANDMA. [*looking at book*] 'Member how we used to set down every night when the chores wuz all done, and paste things in this book?

GRANDPA. Yep, even before Henry was born.

GRANDMA. [*gently*] Law, yes. Why, we started this right after you begun courtin' me.

GRANDPA. [*holding up pressed bit of greenery*] Look, here's a sprig off that plant you and me set out back of the school-house — 'member that day? — it wuz the first time you let me call you Martha.

GRANDMA. [*holding up the sprig*] Yes, I remember. And here, Pa, here's the newspaper article about your volunteerin' in the war.

GRANDPA. Yep, and you and me just engaged. I had my worst battle of the whole war right there, just leavin' you.

GRANDMA. [*gently chiding*] Now, Pa! And look here, that's a picture of me in my lavender dimity. I thought that wuz the grandest dress!

GRANDPA. You sure looked mighty purty in it to me.

GRANDMA. Now we're coming to the story 'bout our weddin'.

GRANDPA. 'Twas the most excitin' event in Elmsville for twenty years, warn't it?

GRANDMA. Land, it wuz for me, anyway.

GRANDPA. 'Member how Luke Ashton ranted around after you turned him down for me?

GRANDMA. Goodness, yes. He went around town lookin' for you with a shotgun.

GRANDPA. Yep, when you jilted him, he like to went crazy.

GRANDMA. He wouldn't go near his newspaper office to do any work fer weeks.

GRANDPA. But he sure went to work on our wedding day.

GRANDMA. Land, yes! What was that awful story he put in the paper 'bout our weddin'?

GRANDPA. When he thought he'd git even with me for cuttin' him out with you? It's right here, someplace. [*turns the pages, peering at them*] It sure wuz too good to leave out of this here scrapbook.

GRANDMA. [*reminiscently*] Goodness, I remember what a time we had gettin' away after the ceremony. Me in my wine-

colored poplin dress, trying to find the carriage you hired for us to go away in.

GRANDPA. And me tryin' to find another horse after Luke Ashton unhitched old Nellie and drove her out in the pasture. Thought he'd keep us from gettin' away on our honeymoon! [*He chuckles*].

GRANDMA. There we wuz, all ready to go and no horse. [*suddenly*] Now I remember! That's what Luke wrote the story about — you gettin' Squire Jones' horse.

GRANDPA. Yep, that wuz it! [*They both chuckle merrily.* MARGARET and HELEN enter, arm in arm].

MARGARET. All this has opened my eyes, Helen. I've been unfair to you and Charles both.

GRANDPA. [*startled*] Land o' Goshen. [*He tries to hide scrapbook*].

GRANDMA. [*looking up, sees them*] Mercy me! [*She starts singing and rocking*].

MARGARET. [*coming down C*] It's all right, Father; we know everything.

MARGARET and HELEN move down R and sit on davenport. GRAMP and GRANDMA look bewildered and still a little frightened. HENRY and CHARLES follow MARGARET and HELEN in. HENRY has his arm across CHARLES' shoulder.

HENRY. Yes, Father, you don't need to hide it again. We know and we're prepared to forgive and forget.

HELEN. [*runs to back of GRAMP's chair and throws her arms around GRAMP*] Everything's O.K., Gramp.

GRANDPA. [*looking at all of them*] You mean — you mean, you found out about this? [*He points to scrapbook*].

CHARLES. Don't you worry, Gramp; Helen and I have fixed everything, haven't we, Helen?

HELEN. We sure have. And Mother and Dad are swell sports, too! [*She moves back of table and down L and stands in back of GRANDMA*].

GRANDMA. Then — it's — it's all right for us to have it!

HENRY. Oh, I suppose you can have it, if you like, but, of course, you understand it must be kept out of sight.

GRANDMA. Oh, sure we'll keep it out of sight. We already done that for a long time.

MARGARET. Yes, yes, we understand why you would. [GRAMP and GRANDMA look puzzled]. But let's not talk about it any more. We're too busy making new plans for the household.

HELEN. [*crossing C to bookcase*] I think I'd better go upstairs and get out my art books.

MARGARET. [*smiles benignly*] That will be lovely, dear.

HENRY. And Charles has a little business to attend to — a small matter of returning a horse to its former owner.

CHARLES. That's right. Guess I better get going. [*He starts to door*].

GRANDPA. Horse? Say, that reminds me, did I ever tell you about the horse on our weddin' trip?

CHARLES and HELEN stop and turn around.

MARGARET. [*pained*] Please, Father, let's not mention it again.

GRANDMA. But, Maggie, you ought to let Pa tell about it, it's such a good story.

HENRY. [*sternly*] We'd rather not hear any more about it, Father.

GRANDPA. Any more? You ain't heard nothin' 'bout it yet.

MARGARET. We've heard plenty, Father. [*She gives him a look as if to close the subject definitely, then turns and smiles at CHARLES and HELEN*]. Now run along, children. [*as HELEN starts to exit*] Oh, and Helen, you might call Mrs. Dorman and tell her you can go on that picnic with the Zeta Club girls.

HELEN. [*turns in the doorway, her face lighting up*] Honest, Mother? Oh, you're a peach! [*blowing a kiss to GRANDMA and GRAMP*] Bye, Gramp, bye, Grandma, you old darlings!

GRANDMA. Land sakes, I can't make out what this is all about!

GRANDPA. [*scratching his head in bewilderment*] Me either, but Charles'd like to hear my horse story, wouldn't you, Charles?

CHARLES. [*patting him on shoulder*] I know about it, Gramp. [*starts to exit, turns in doorway*] Say, Dad, may I go to the office with you tomorrow? I might as well begin now reading in your law books.

HENRY. [*beaming*] Fine, my boy, fine!

MARGARET. Oh, Charles, stop on your way through town and ask Joe Burris home to dinner with you if you like.

CHARLES. Joe Burris! Gee, that's swell! You'll like him,

honest, even if his dad is a factory hand. S'long, folks.
[CHARLES exits R whistling loudly].

MARGARET. [crossing to HENRY, slips her arm through his] Henry, we've got fine children. They really came through in a crisis.

HENRY. They certainly did. You know, Margaret, I believe it takes a little blow like this to bring a family together.

MARGARET. It certainly opened my eyes. I'm going to settle down to being a wife and mother instead of a society matron.
[MARGARET and HENRY move slowly toward door. GRAMP and GRANDMA have been watching and listening in puzzlement].

GRANDPA. [twisting in his chair] Say, can't I tell you my horse story now? It's all written up right in here. [He points eagerly to the scrapbook].

HENRY. [turning in doorway] Must I tell you again, Father, that that is a closed chapter?

MARGARET. [as she and HENRY exit upstairs] Yes, we've all forgotten it already. Now, remember, the Otises are coming tonight.

GRANDPA. [looking after them] Well, don't that beat all?

GRANDMA. Land sakes, Pa, you'd think there wuz something terrible about your borrowing a horse so's we could go away on a weddin' trip.

GRANDPA. But they didn't hear the funniest part. 'Member how Squire Jones give me his gray mare, his prize gray mare, and how mad it made Luke Ashton?

GRANDMA. Goodness, yes. Said he'd get even, so he wrote that crazy story in his newspaper.

GRANDPA. [chuckling] Then Squire Jones made him print an apology.

GRANDMA. Land sakes, yes! [They both cackle; GRAMP slaps his knee. GRANDMA hunches her chair nearer and peers at book].

GRANDPA. A good story to tell Judge Otis tonight!

GRANDMA. Now, he would enjoy this one!

GRANDPA. Here 'tis, in black and white. [reads] "Notorious Horse Thief Caught Red-handed!" Heh, heh, heh!

GRANDMA. Horse thief! He means you, Pa! [They both laugh hilariously].

CURTAIN

Suggestions to Producers

DEFINITELY DEPENDENT ON ITS SETTING FOR a proper mood is the verse-drama, *Christopher's "Death."* Somber coloring for the walls will develop a foreboding atmosphere which will enhance the characters and action of the play. Let us hope your cyclorama is dark. Avoid light on it in order to create the dull atmosphere. Doors are unnecessary, but there should be openings down right and left. The cyclorama can be draped at the rear window to give the effect of curtains, or your window piece can be hung with a material contrasting with the cyclorama. This play is best performed with a cyclorama, since it does not suggest a realistic setting.

The walls of both other types of settings, either your cloth-covered or cardboard flats, should be shaded from a black or dark color at the top, down to a dull light color at the bottom. For the cut-down scenery, consider the color of your cyclorama and let the top of the cardboard match it.

Furniture for the settings can provide color spots of interest. A cloth of solid color draped over the bench on the platform, left, and the same for the table, left center at the rear, will break the monotony of the background. A chintz with big figures used for covering the chair, right, balances the color on the stage.

The platform, left, can be made by using a long, low table or box. Drape the downstage sides completely from top to floor with a dark cloth, and thumbtack it into place. Boxes of graduated sizes may be used to form the steps.

A high window which suggests a skylight should run almost the full height of the set at center rear. Behind it, hang a sky cloth. A ground row suggesting a city skyline, apartment houses, etc., can be set at the base of the sky cloth. Exaggerated proportions used for this window will dwarf the characters and enhance the tragedy.

LIGHTING

It is important in this play to let the lighting be as significant as possible. At the opening, the sky, which is seen through the rear window, is lighted with white light both at the top and the bottom. As the play progresses, the top lights fade out white and come up blue. Then the bottom lights fade out white and come up blue so that the whole sky presents the appearance of night.

Lighting for the interior can best be done with border or strip lights and four spots. The strips should be dimmed to provide a very dull light. Amber or straw gelatins color all lights except the spot at the left #4. Spot #1 covers the dais and bench. Spot #2 covers the chair R. Spot #3 covers the table, stool, and easel up C. Spot #4 is not used until Christopher begins to paint Death. In the progress of his speech, the light slowly begins to show on the left wall and moves around toward him. During the pause which follows his collapse, the light moves slowly to the left again and fades out. Use either a deep blue or purple gelatin on this spot. If it is impossible to let the light move, it can still be used effectively from a stationary position. See the acting version for light cues.

PROPERTIES

One large easel

Small, square worktable with tubes of paint, brushes, paint cloths, etc.

One palette with paints and brush

Workstool

Several frames of canvas in various sizes of pictures

One large framed canvas

Bridge or floor lamp and table lamp

Large comfortable chair or davenport

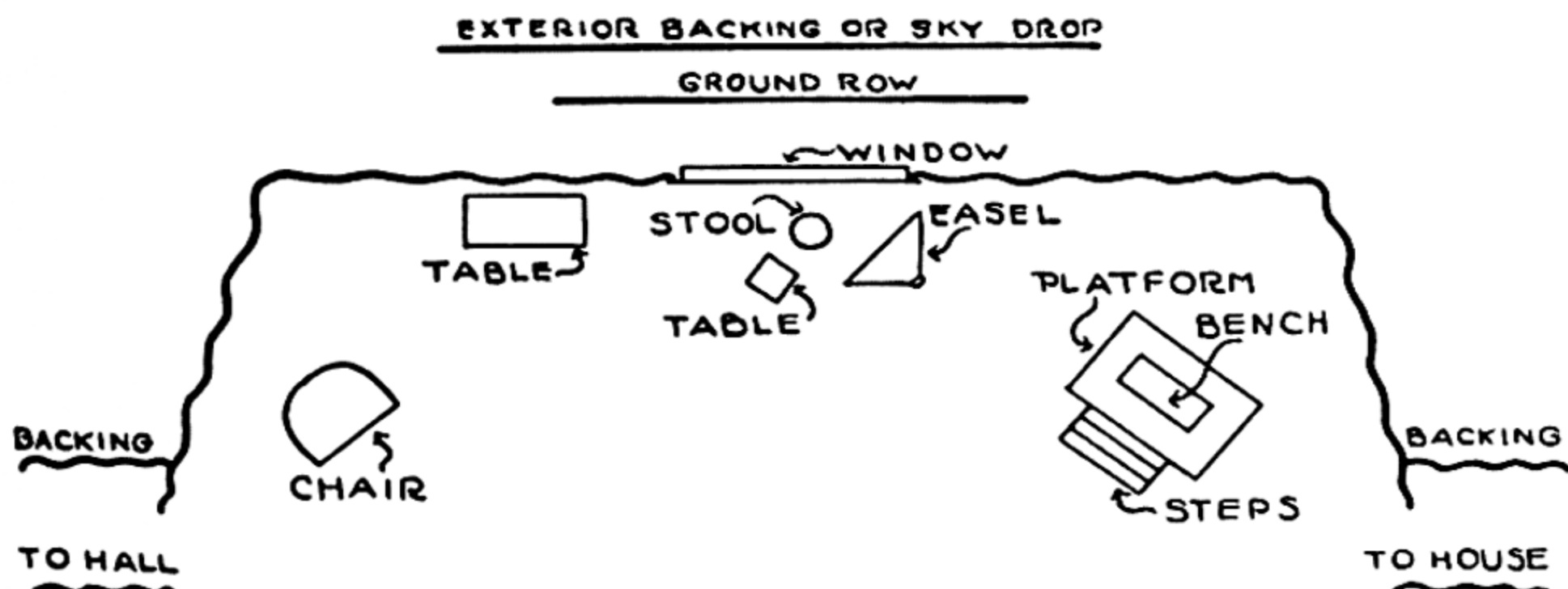
Small tea table or library table

Rectangular platform with long bench or low stool

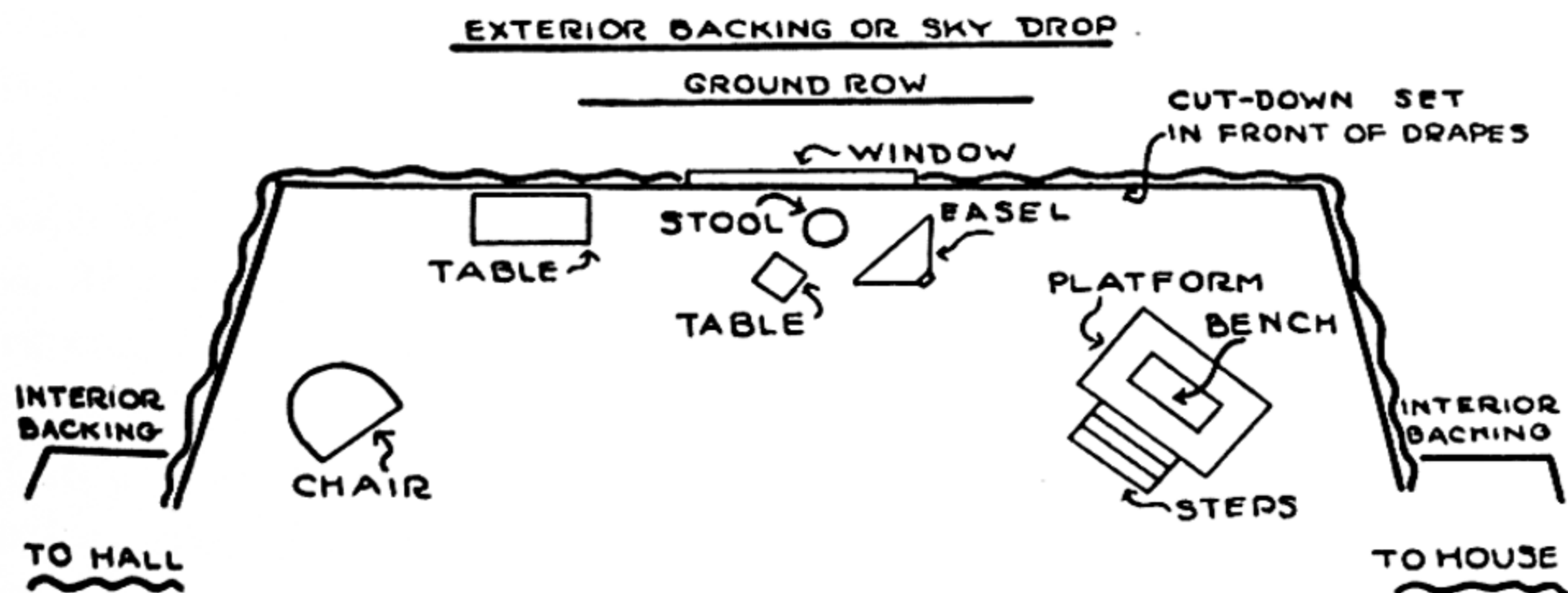
One tea set or teapot with cups and saucers

COSTUMES

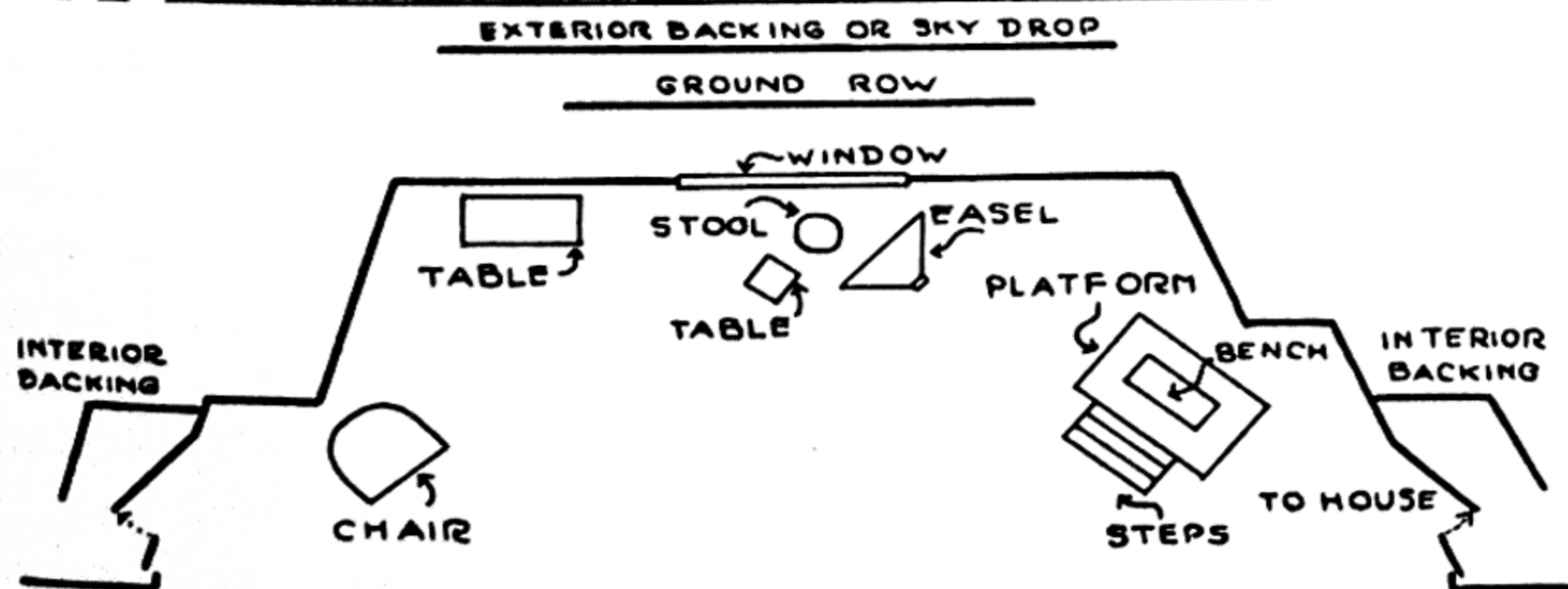
Christopher. A dark, very worn-looking smock. Dark trousers. Soft, worn, easy slippers, which give him an almost shuffling walk.



CYCLOPAMA SETTING



CARDBOARD SETTING



COMPLETE FLAT SETTING CHRISTOPHER'S DEATH

6

Jan. A flowing evening dress or long costume dress made of a soft material (cheesecloth over silk will give the flowing drapery effect). Change from model costume to a simple sport dress.

Bertha. A voluminous house dress covered by a large bright apron tied about her middle. Great, wide shoes which give her a plodding walk.

Paul. A well-cut, well-pressed suit of conservative color.

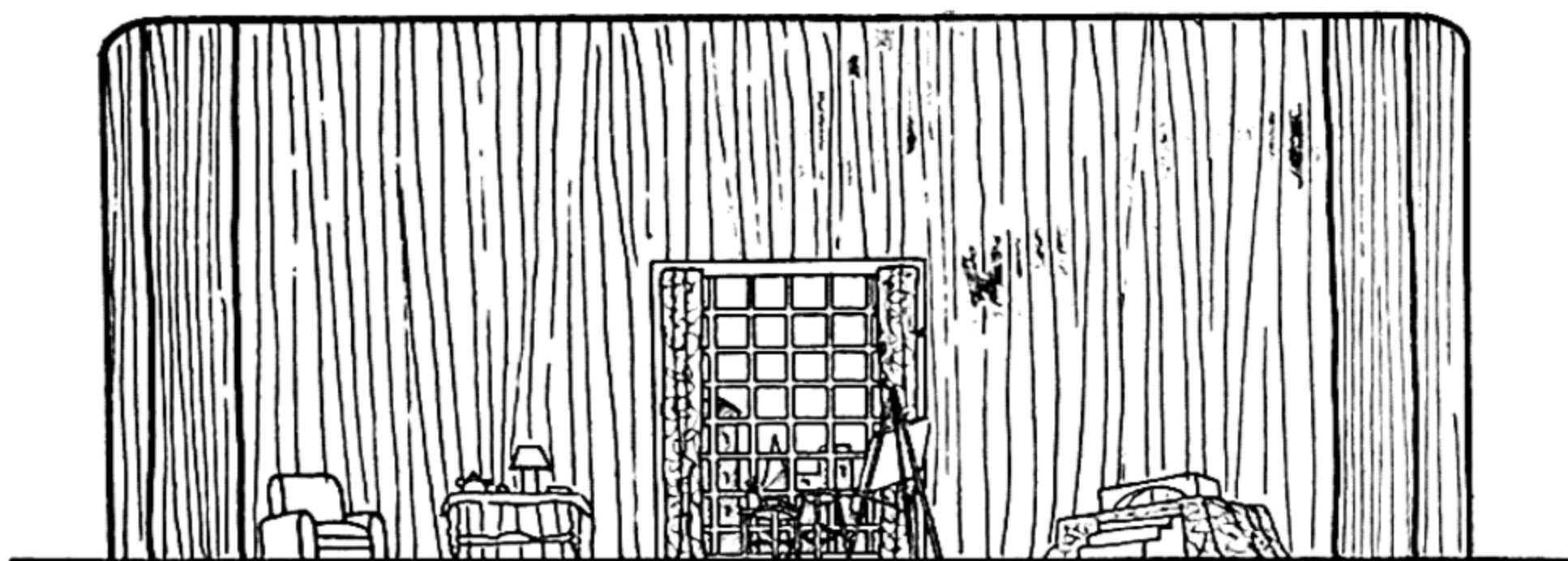
MAKE-UP

Christopher. Old-age foundation grease paint on face, neck, and hands. Wrinkles in forehead, around eyes, nose, mouth, chin, and neck. Hollows in cheeks, under eyes, and temples. No rouge or lipstick. Gray, bushy hair and eyebrows. Wrinkles and hollows in hands. Dark powder over all. Slightly accentuate eyes to make them bright. Hair should give appearance of not having been cut for some time.

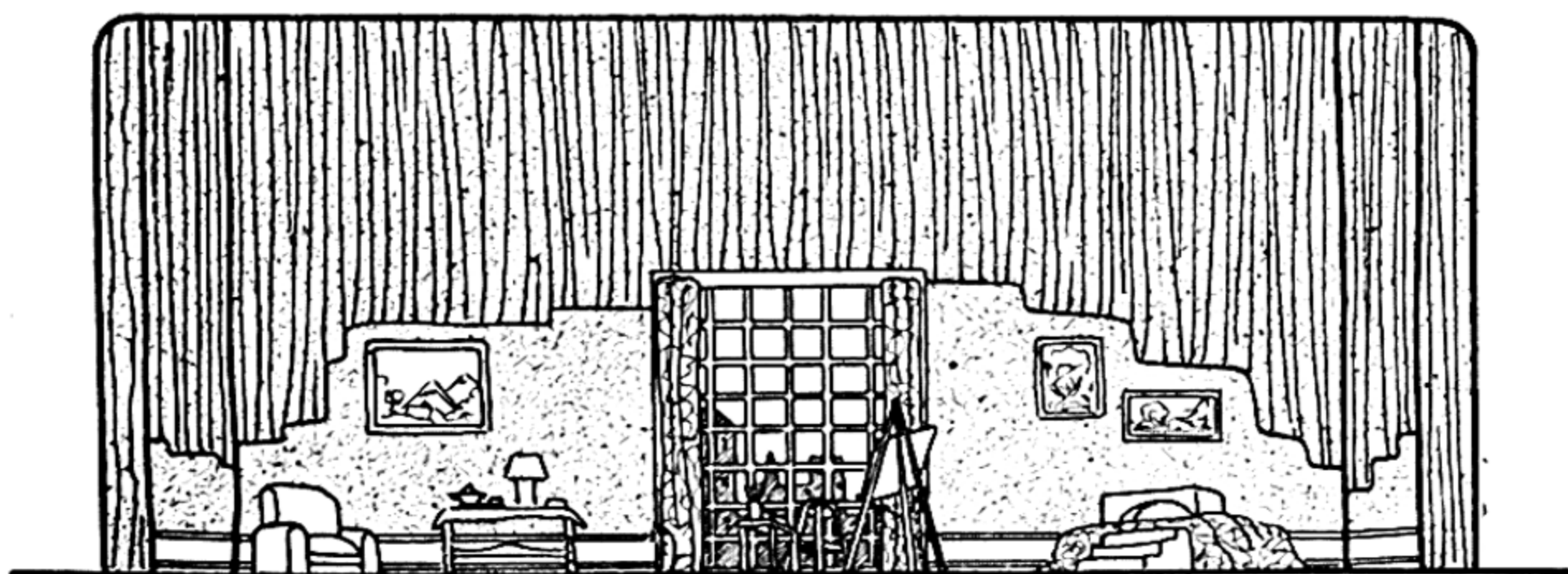
Jan. Straight juvenile light foundation grease paint. Rouge and lipstick to harmonize with hair. Blue eye shadow on upper eyelids. Darken lashes and brows with black or brown. Enlarge eyes by drawing line along edge of upper lid from inner corner to quarter of an inch beyond outer corner. Same for lower lid. Light powder over all.

Bertha. Ruddy foundation grease paint on face, neck, and hands. All lines must curve up and out to give round-faced effect. Few wrinkles around eyes and mouth should curve out and upwards. Lines on neck to give double-chin effect. Rouge should be smoothed away from nose and up toward cheekbones. Lipstick to be applied generously and perhaps to enlarge mouth. Eyebrows accentuated in a definite semicircular shape. Reddish light powder over all. Dress hair in German style, perhaps drawn back, with braid around head.

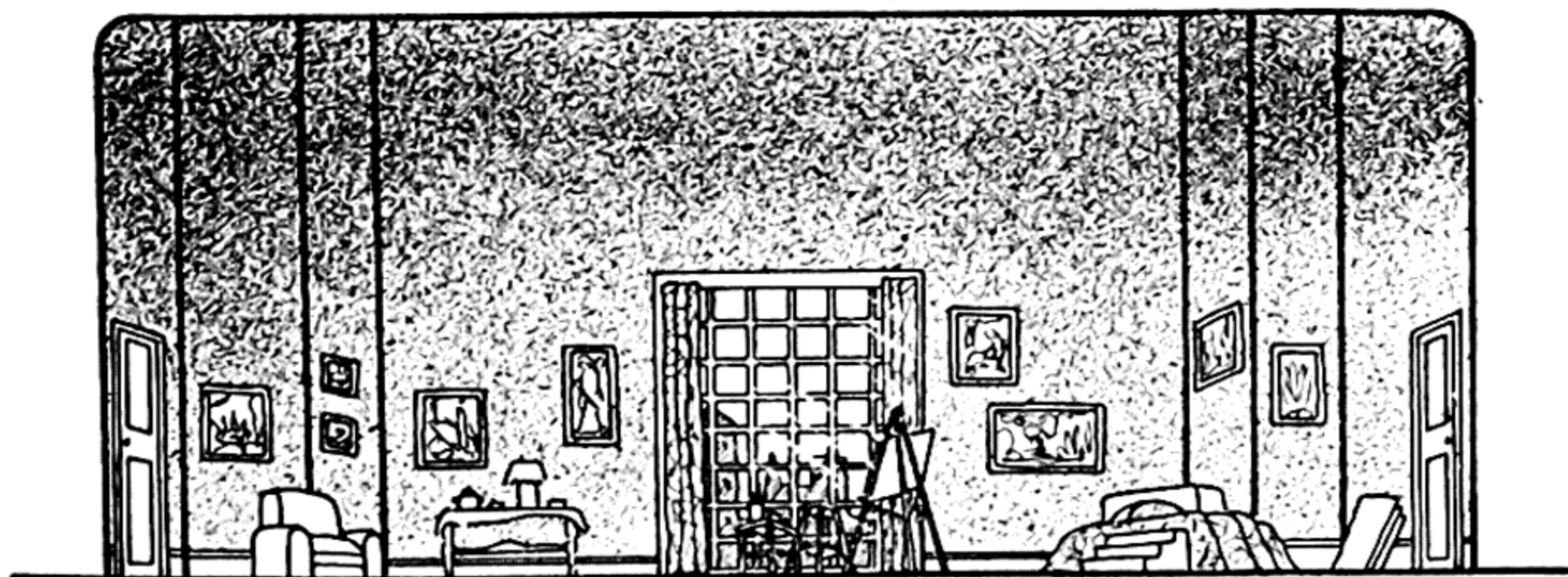
Paul. Juvenile foundation grease paint on face and neck. Slight touch of rouge and lipstick. Eyes enlarged, if necessary, with line on upper lid edge extending beyond outer corner, and a like line on lower lid, halfway from inner corner to beyond outer edge. Medium light powder over all.



CYCLORAMA SETTING



CARDBOARD SETTING



COMPLETE FLAT SETTING

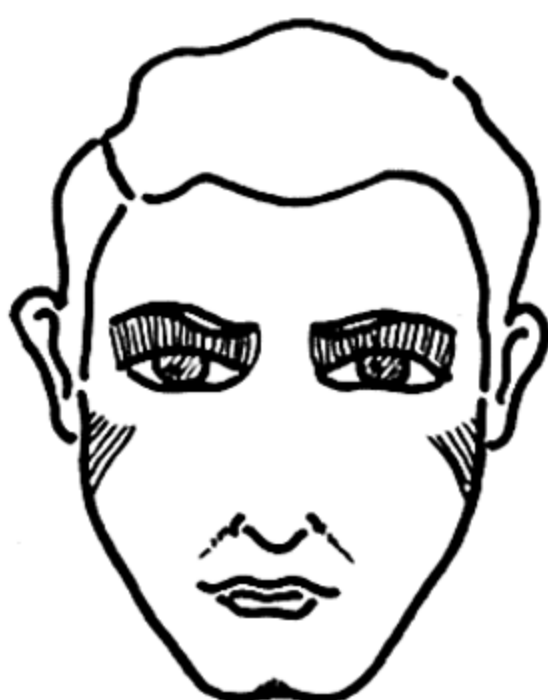
CHRISTOPHER'S DEATH





CHRISTOPHER'S
DEATH

CHRISTOPHER



PAUL



JAN

MAKEUP



BERTHA



Christopher's "Death"

A Verse Drama in One Act

CHARACTERS

Christopher. An artistically intense old man, whose love for beauty and his work gives him a strength of character which gray hairs and faltering steps belie.

Jan. A girl at once gay and serious. Her contagious vivacity is enhanced by a sympathetic, understanding heart.

Bertha. A motherly, good-natured woman, whose rotund expanse of figure houses a like amount of devotion.

Paul. Impetuous, disarming, and eager, an inspired young architect in work, a boyish enthusiast in love.

THE PLACE: *Where Christopher lives and works*

THE TIME: *One evening with Christopher, today, tomorrow, yesterday*

THE SCENE

It is late evening in the workshop studio of old Christopher. By the fading light coming through the tall, wide window at the back, we see a long room comfortably arranged with attractive but old pieces of furniture. A worn chair has been covered with bright chintz which matches the long drapes drawn back from the wide window. Standing in front of the window is an easel, a tall workstool, and to the right of these a table littered with brushes, tubes of paint, frames of canvas, and other artist's equipment. At the left of center, against the back wall, is a small table for tea things. A bridge lamp stands at rear, RC, and a lamp is on the tea table.

On the left side of the room is a platform up to which a set of low steps leads. A deep-colored rug has been thrown over the platform on which stands a long garden bench.

Along the back wall at the right are stacked a number of canvases,

finished and unfinished, framed and unframed. The walls of the room are hung with frequent paintings, sketches, and portraits.

A door, right, leads to the part of the house which probably contains living room, dinette, and kitchen. A door, down left, leads to the bedrooms.

AT RISE

*Old Christopher is busy at his easel.
Now his white head is bent over his canvas!
Now it quickly turns, allowing his bright black eyes
To scrutinize his model.*

*His model is a lovely-looking girl;
Her long, white draperies flow along her figure
And trickle down along the bench on which she poses.
The fading light, the graceful gown, the averted profile
Would make her seem almost ethereal if we could not see
A vivaciousness about her; an aliveness playing dead.
She sits in a statuesque stillness; in contrast
To the quick and busy movements of the old man
As he paints.*

CHRISTOPHER

[at easel, RC, brush in hand]
Turn your head a little, left —
There, that's it — that's just the angle.
[paints rapidly for a moment, then pauses, brush in air]
But maybe you are tired — you've sat so long?

JAN

[without moving, giggles]
Not tired one bit —
Just numb, and quite pleasantly paralyzed.

CHRISTOPHER

[resumes his rapid painting, speaking in rhythm with his strokes]
If you could hold it just one moment more —
For one line here — a shadow there —
I think — I think I'm getting it!

JAN

[*softly*]

Poor Dad, you've worked so hard.

[*viciously*]

If that fly comes near my nose again —

You'll have a cross-eyed model here.

[*rolls her eyes in pursuit of a fly near her nose; blows upward at her tormentor. All this is done without a single muscle moved except in lips and eyes*].

Buzz — zz — skat, you!

CHRISTOPHER

[*works in silence for a moment; painting all the while as with quick movements of his head, he looks first at her, then at his work. Finally he pauses, looks at the picture closely, then at her. He throws his brush and palette down, groaning*].

Oh, it isn't any use. It's no good at all!

Just look at it! It's empty — flat!

[*Begin to fade out white light at base of sky*].

JAN

[*still holding her pose*]

Maybe because it looks like me.

CHRISTOPHER

[*staring at the picture despondently*]

It hasn't any spark.

I can't seem to give it life!

JAN

But I'm very much alive —

That is, I think I am.

[*She stretches her arms carefully, turns her face toward him*].

CHRISTOPHER

[*sighs deeply, looks at her*]

I know you are. You have that spark —

That very thing I've tried to transfer here —

[looks at picture again]

If only I had caught it — here on canvas,
My picture would be great.

JAN

Tell me, Father, have I still two legs?
I'd swear that one had disappeared.
[She stands up stiffly, stretching her legs gingerly].

CHRISTOPHER

[not listening to her; still stares at the picture]
Perhaps, if I could try again —
Next time I'd use less color, more illusion.

JAN

I'm glad you're painting me in oil.
It may limber up my joints!
[She exercises legs and arms vigorously].

CHRISTOPHER

[sadly]
You're much too real; your soul likes having fun.
I can't put that on canvas.
[white light out at base of sky. Begin to bring blue up]

JAN

[steps from platform; crosses quickly to him]
I'm sorry, Dad; I'm a flippant chit.
But now let's rest.
[pulls him down on stool]
You mustn't overwork, you know;
And get your heart to doing acrobats again.
[The old man smiles wearily, reaches up and pats her hand. BERTHA waddles in from DR with tea tray].

BERTHA

Wie gehts, you both are crazy!
 You shut up here for three big hours by the clock.
[marches over, sets tray on table LC at rear]
 Here, you drink some tea — und eat my cake.
 It's goot — it put beef on your bones.

JAN

[crossing to table]
 Bertha, you're an angel with big feet.
 Give me that cake.
[She grabs a piece of cake, eats hungrily. In her other hand she takes a cup of tea, crosses to bench L and sits on it with her draperies and legs pulled up under her. CHRISTOPHER has moved wearily to chair down R where he sits dejectedly].

BERTHA

[plods over to the old man with cup of tea]
 Here, you drink this quick.
 Don't fuss to me; I get terrific mad.

CHRISTOPHER

[takes cup from BERTHA]
 Your bigness has no limit in your feet, good Bertha;
 It transcends even to your German heart.

BERTHA

You say vat I don't understand.
 Shut up your talk und drink your tea.
[She returns to table, gets teapot, and goes L to refill JAN's cup].

JAN

[her mouth full, gestures with cup]
 How long, how long, O Bertha, will you in our kitchen stay,
 When for your tasty efforts, I have no cash to pay?

BERTHA

Ach, und wouldn't I pay you,
To stay from in my kitchen out?
[*They laugh, but the old man looks sadly at his picture*].

CHRISTOPHER

[*rises from chair, cup in hand, goes to look at picture on easel*]
I thought this painting would be good —
Perhaps would sell —
[*blue light full up at base of sky. Begin to dim white above sky drop*]

JAN

What do we want with money?
We have Bertha — we have cake — and
[*She swipes at fly on her cake*].
We have flies!

CHRISTOPHER

Your earnings have to buy for me
My tubes of paint, my brushes —
And to what good?

BERTHA

[*crossing from JAN to CHRISTOPHER*]
Ach, und I don't like it ven you're sad.
Already you are look just like
Herr Death had whopped you in the face!

CHRISTOPHER

[*His face suddenly lights up*].
My "Death" picture! — That's what I want to work on!
That's why I did no good today; I want to paint on "Death!"
Here, take it. [*shoves tea at BERTHA*] Now where is it?
Where did I put it last time?
[*He hurries to R corner of room, where canvases and paintings are stacked up and leaning against the wall. He begins to rummage*].

BERTHA

Mein Gott, he gets dot out again.
For fifty times, yah, hundred times,
He go back to dot old vun.
[*She crosses to table L, sets cup down with a bang*].

JAN

[*goes to table for more cake*]
He thinks that will be his masterpiece,
His one inspiring effort —
If he ever gets it finished.
[*as she walks to chair down R and sits*]
Umm — this cake is my idea of nectar —
In the more solid form, of course.

BERTHA

[*turning to her anxiously*]
Ach, und you don't like it —
It iss heavy, yah?

JAN

No, Bertha, no. Not heavy — heavenly.

BERTHA

[*pleased*]
Yah? Dot's better. Yah!
I save for Mister Paul a piece.

JAN

When he gets a taste of it,
He'll want to marry you instead of me.

CHRISTOPHER

Here it is — I've found it!
[*Excitedly he drags the canvas out, rushes over to easel, throws painting off, sets up his canvas of Death, and stands looking at it*].

BERTHA

[grumblingly, picks up tray from table L and waddles out mumbling]
Vy did he haf to find dot old Death ting!

CHRISTOPHER

[All his despondency is gone; he is filled with enthusiasm as he stands looking at the canvas].

It will be good to work on this again.
You know, it has got something there —
I'm sure of it. A promise of —
Perhaps of genius — and then again,
I wonder.

JAN

[comes and looks over his shoulder]
But why must you always salvage this?
You have so many times.

CHRISTOPHER

Because this will be my great one.
I'm sure of it — I've felt it all along,
Even while I struggled with these other ones,
And knew that they were failures.
[white out above sky. Begin to bring up blue above]

JAN

But why choose Death to be your masterpiece?
It makes me creepy; it's so dark and strange.
It seems impenetrable, mysterious, and cold.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh, no, it's not at all. I see it differently.
Death is warm, it's friendly, sympathetic!
Yet it's exciting, too, and thrilling, like a new adventure.
It may be dark, mysterious, but behind that darkness
I feel there must be light; a sort of brightness —

The kind that stars give off when there isn't any moon.
Or the light you see through church windows on a winter
afternoon.

It's something beautiful. If only I could see it clearly,
Well enough to put it here — on canvas.

JAN

[*moved*]

If you could paint it as you tell it —
Death would be beautiful —
And it would be your masterpiece.

CHRISTOPHER

[*staring at the canvas, his exuberance has given way to a powerful seriousness*]

Yes, but why can't I paint it as I see it?
It frightens me almost — this thing has come to mean so much.
I began it years ago — when your mother died, you know.
Now, strangely, Death has quite become my life.
This is the thing to mark me — place me with the great,
Or send me to obscurity. That's why it means so much!
[*almost with anguish*]
That's why I can work on nothing else successfully!

JAN

You mustn't get excited.

CHRISTOPHER

No, I must save my strength.
I'm getting old, my heart is weak.
What if Death should finish me [*indicates painting*] before I
finish Death?

JAN

Please, Father, don't. [*She stands at his left, her hand on his arm*].

CHRISTOPHER

[walks down C]

Why can't I paint there what I feel,
That thing for which there is no name?
You see a dull, gray mass there now,
But a dozen strokes, or less perhaps,
Would change it, give it that elusive spark —
So when you looked on it, you'd see,
Not just a painting — you'd see — Death!
[blue full up over whole of sky drop]

JAN

[almost with tears in her eyes, says slowly]
Somehow I feel you'll do it;
You'll make this picture great.

CHRISTOPHER

[bitterly, pacing back and forth at C]
Perhaps I won't — and then I've failed completely.
I'll drop among the unknown, a forgotten painter.
[almost wildly]
That's it, I'm a painter, not an artist,
For "artist" implies perfection and achievement.
And what have I achieved or perfected so far?
Nothing I can leave behind me.
[He talks on in a frenzy, hardly noticing her].
I'm just an old man who tries to paint,
Seeking in my many labored canvases to incarnate there
That abstract something, that soul-like substance,
If a soul can have a substance — That Thing
Which makes a picture great — will make this picture great.
I myself can't quite define it, I only know I can't confine it
Within the strokes made by this aged but steady hand —
[He stops suddenly down C, and stands gazing at his hand, his mind lost in thought].

JAN

[*gently, after a pause*]

You're not yourself tonight.

It worries me.

[*goes to him; striving to be gay*]

And you wouldn't wrinkle the marble brow
Of your only child, would you?

CHRISTOPHER

[*smiles at her abstractedly*]

My only child, the daughter of a painter,
But seeming more the daughter of an artist —
You imply perfection, to me, at least.

JAN

[*crosses in front of him to down L*]

What? With my very crooked eyebrows and my lopping ears?

CHRISTOPHER

Perhaps not, in beauty.

But perfection of beauty gives too complete satisfaction.
Your joy of living is your charm, your deep attraction.

JAN

[*curtseys low*]

Milord, you flatter me quite to distraction.

Tomorrow I shall leave my lowly stenographic state,
And seek to rise, who knows, perhaps to queenly heights.

CHRISTOPHER

[*coming back to reality*]

Yes, yes, your work, I had forgotten.

[*sighs*]

I wish you didn't have to work — a common office girl.

JAN

[sitting on down L corner of platform]
But we must have the wherewithal
To buy the little wherewithals
That go to make up Bertha's cakes.

CHRISTOPHER

[moves back to easel, looks at picture again]
If I could sell a painting —
Or paint one that would sell,
You wouldn't have to work — and buy our food — our clothes.

JAN

You will, some day — and meanwhile
I shall type my merry way along.

CHRISTOPHER

If my heart stays strong,
And your heart stays strong — against Paul,
I'll finish Death — and it will make me great,
I'm sure of that.

[turns to her in childish fright]
But if you should leave me —

JAN

[rising]
I'm going to, in just a moment, *[pauses roguishly]*
But only to change my dress.

CHRISTOPHER

Paul wants to take you from me —
He wants to marry you.

JAN

[folding hands dramatically on bosom]
So his designs on me are honorable —
Ah, my virtue is triumphant!

CHRISTOPHER

[unmoved by her playfulness, says in anguished tone]
And I'd be alone — alone!
I couldn't work!

JAN

[crosses to him, shaking her finger at him]
Don't frame your canvases before they're painted.
I'm here with you, and will be, long years yet.

CHRISTOPHER

Yes, I know.
[smiles as if relieved. She hugs him].
I know you wouldn't leave me.
[BERTHA enters chuckling].

BERTHA

He iss come, your Mister Paul.
Ach, he iss a monkey clown.
He grab me — wham — und sving me fast,
Mein Gott, I almost choke my breath.
"Bertha, Bertha," he say to me,
"You should get yourself a man to love!"
[She shakes with laughter].
Yah, dot's vat he say. Yah, I laugh still.

JAN

[moves to door L]
But you might toy with the suggestion.
Now bring him here while I go change.
[BERTHA exits R, JAN pauses at door L].

And Father, will you and Paul try staving off
The usual argument, till I get back to referee?
[Exits].

CHRISTOPHER

[calling after her]

I am the perfect gentleman —
Until he says the truest form of art
Is architecture. Bah!

[BERTHA and PAUL enter, he with his arm around her, she giggling like a schoolgirl].

PAUL

Do you know why you appeal to me
As an architect, my Bertha?
Because you're monumental, solid,
Like a well-built edifice.

BERTHA

[standing down R with PAUL, pushes him off playfully].
Yah, I'm not no edifice.

PAUL

[rushing over to CHRISTOPHER, who sits before his easel]
I've hit upon it, Chris, old boy!
If you want to paint something really great,
Have Bertha sit for you. You could call it
"Girl with Feet." It'd be colossal!

CHRISTOPHER

[testily]

Don't call me "Chris, old boy!"
And you know quite well I've painted Bertha.

BERTHA

Yah, you should have saw.

My hair was green, my chin look like a red teacup,
And my feet, he do not make dem show at all.

[BERTHA exits R, still chuckling].

PAUL

[laughs after BERTHA, then turns to CHRISTOPHER]
And how's Jan's portrait coming?

CHRISTOPHER

[putting down his brush, rises and moves down LC]
I gave it up.

PAUL

What's wrong? It didn't look like her?

CHRISTOPHER

I had her likeness — but not her lifeness.

PAUL

[steps down RC]

Like that commission I want to get.

I've got aspiration but no inspiration.

CHRISTOPHER

I had a commission once — to paint a senator — Ugh!

PAUL

Uh hum — for once I see your point.

[moves back to easel, looks at picture]

So you resurrected "Death" again.

Let's have a look.

[He studies the painting; the old man still down LC, watches him with hostile eyes].

Your lines are dim and indistinct.
Death should be strong and sure of line.
In Death I see a mausoleum,
[*He indicates sweeping lines in the air*].
Straight, grim lines of marble stone.

CHRISTOPHER

Because you are an architect
You see art in lines, in buildings.
Bertha is a monument, Death a mausoleum.
Perhaps in Jan you see a bungalow!

PAUL

Perhaps, but I see nothing here.
[*points to painting*]

CHRISTOPHER

No, you don't know how to see.

PAUL

Do you think those blurs and blobs might grow on me
Until I recognized the subject painted there?

CHRISTOPHER

Why must you use that "grow on me"?
A painting never grows on one, as if
It were a tail or wart!

PAUL

Then why not make it evident at first?
My plans are pictures too, but my lines
Are clean and disciplined. You see
Their beauty at first glance.

CHRISTOPHER

You call a blueprint chart a picture!
It's nothing but a maze of cold, flat lines
Even a child could draw!

PAUL

[*petulantly*]
And any child could paint as well as that,
A patch of muddy splashes run together!

CHRISTOPHER

[*outraged*]
Muddy splashes! And is that what you see?

PAUL

[*relentlessly*]
That's all! It looks like that to me.
[*He takes a step down RC, stands, hands in pockets, rocking triumphantly on his heels*].

CHRISTOPHER

[*in uncontrolled anger*]
I suppose it means no more to you — than this —
[*grabs a sheet of paper from worktable, hurriedly lines it with his brush*]
A hurried daub or two;
Some lines to make a figure!

PAUL

[*looks at it, shrugging his shoulders*]
Label that one "Sunrise" —
It has as much a meaning as this one
You've labeled "Death"!

CHRISTOPHER

[*exploding*]

You're childishly ridiculous!
What you really want to say to me
Is that your architectural jumbles
Have more meaning than my paintings.

PAUL

I didn't want to say it —
But that's exactly what I think.

CHRISTOPHER

[*wildly*]

You are crazy as a pig!
Why even this — one aimless splotch of line and color
[*holds the paper in his hand, which trembles with rage*]
Calls forth more real meaning than you could create ever,
In days, in weeks of architectural inspiration.

PAUL

[*losing his control*]

If you think so, you are crazy as a pig!
I'll show you — here —
[*He snatches a paint box, odds and ends from the old man's worktable and quickly sets up the semblance of a house on the worktable*].
There — I've made a house!
[*sets up splotched paper old CHRIS has made beside his house, then steps back with satisfied glee*]
Now, side by side, compare them,
See which commands more meaning!

CHRISTOPHER

Why, mine, of course!
What is that mess you've stacked together?

PAUL

A mess, is it? Why, any fool —
An ordinary dunce could tell my "mess"
Has more of meaning than your daubing there.

CHRISTOPHER

You think so, eh? All right, we'll see.
Bertha, Bertha, come in here!
We'll see, we'll see all right!

PAUL

Bertha's just the one! Bertha, Bertha!
[*They both run to the door, calling loudly, glaring at each other*].
I say we'll see. She'll prove it!

CHRISTOPHER

Which calls forth more meaning! Bah!
[*He paces back and forth, down R, muttering to himself; PAUL paces back and forth behind him, also muttering*].

BERTHA

[*entering in amazement*]
Ach, du lieber himmel!
Vy you two yell like hyenas?
[*At her entrance they both make a dash for her*].

CHRISTOPHER

[*taking her arm, on her L*]
Bertha, come over here.

PAUL

[*taking her other arm*]
Yes, Bertha, right over here.
[*They lead the astonished BERTHA to the table rear RC. She stands facing the table, her back to the audience. PAUL on her R, CHRIS on her L*].

CHRISTOPHER

Now Bertha, I want you to observe
Here on the table —

PAUL

[interrupting]

These two exhibits, Bertha, here and here.

[indicates the paper painting and would-be house]

CHRISTOPHER

And tell us, Bertha, which of them,
At first impression, has more significance.

PAUL

Yes, Bertha, the — ah — painting

[glares at CHRISTOPHER]

Or — the little model.

[smiles in pleased security]

Which means the more to you?

[BERTHA stares blankly at the exhibits, then at the two men, and then back at the exhibits. Suddenly she bursts into laughter, turns around, face front, and doubles over in glee].

BERTHA

Ach, du lieber Gott! Vich has the most of meaning —
Dem two things?

[points to exhibits and doubles up with glee again]

Dem both don't mean vun ting to me —

And you — you both is crazy in the head.

[She waddles out R, laughing loudly.]

The two men look after her, then at each other, abashed.

There is silence. PAUL, at C, in a swift, disgusted movement, knocks his house down. CHRISTOPHER furtively snatches up his paper painting and crumples it, throwing it to the floor as he walks down LC].

PAUL

[his back to CHRISTOPHER]

We must have seemed ridiculous — even so to Bertha.

CHRISTOPHER

[his back to PAUL]

I guess I lost my temper.

PAUL

[turns toward CHRISTOPHER]

Me too. Why must we always disagree?

Each night I come here, vowing not to anger you —

And then —

CHRISTOPHER

[turning and crossing R to armchair where he sits dejectedly]

We have an argument.

PAUL

We seem to see each other as we see each other's work.

CHRISTOPHER

You think me just a failure.

[interrupts the boy's gesture of denial]

Oh yes, you do. Well, perhaps I am.

[looks at the painting of Death]

Perhaps I am too old.

[sighs, rises, starts to cross to door L]

But now I'll go to bed. I'm tired, quite tired.

PAUL

[impulsively taking a step after him]

I'm sorry, sir. I wish we might, in some way,

Understand each other.

Christopher's "Death"

CHRISTOPHER

[turns]

I'm sorry, too. I wish we might.

But I'm afraid we never shall.

[The old man looks at him for a moment; then he turns, and slowly, almost feebly exits through door L. PAUL watches him leave, then turns, looks at the painting, and shakes his head. He is standing before the easel when JAN enters from L; she has changed her draperies to a simple silk dress].

JAN

Hail, master-builder.

[salutes him with majestic, upraised arm gesture]

PAUL

Hail, goose-girl.

[Salutes her with like gesture. They both laugh. He crosses to her at C, takes her in his arms, swings her around, and kisses her].

JAN

I was faint with jealousy for fear

I'd come out here and find you in Bertha's arms.

PAUL

You couldn't find me, in Bertha's arms.

JAN

How did you get on with Dad?

As opposite as usual?

PAUL

It was all my fault. But he and I are misfits,
A Greek temple and a lunch car
Erected side by side.

JAN

I know.

[She sighs, then speaks gaily].

But tell me, my lunch car, you've something important.

I see the outline of a cathedral popping forth from your eyes.

PAUL

I do have something to tell you.

Come sit here — let me relax.

[He leads her to L, she climbs steps and sits on bench. He sits on the steps of the platform at her feet].

I'll tell you about it.

JAN

Now don't tell me you've gone and punched another fellow Architect —

PAUL

Nope, not today. No more punchings
After that lecture I got from you last time.

JAN

I know you want to poison the one who designed
The model for Ye Home Beautiful.

PAUL

That's an idea. But you wouldn't let me.

JAN

I want you to startle the world — but not that way.

PAUL

That's just it. That's what I want to tell you!

JAN

What? That you've started startling?

PAUL

No, and I won't — ever —
Until things are different.

JAN

Things? What things?

PAUL

You and I. You're away from me too much.
I want you with me all the time!

JAN

But Paul —

PAUL

[rises from steps; crosses to R]
I'm no good at all without you —
I'm discontented, restless, lost —
Don't you see, you've got to help me!

JAN

But I do. Don't I make you eat your spinach —
Don't I teach you not to swear?

PAUL

It's not little things like that.
It's something bigger — it's my work, my whole career!
When I'm with you, I'm sane and calm and logical.
My plans and ideas begin to clear up —

They're not all so mixed and jumbled as before —
I feel confidence coming back to me —
I'm eager to get at my work —
It's like some ambitious inspiration —

JAN

Are you sure it isn't all imagination?

PAUL

[turning to her, his pent-up emotion beginning to break forth]
No, no, it's real!
I go home and work all night — it's easy then.
My drawings take on life — I can see what this designer wants,
What that one meant. I'm all excited, happy!
I want to show them to you — ask you what you think —
Tell you of a new idea I have.

JAN

Then you should come to me.
I'd be excited, happy, too, to listen to you,
And see your plans.

PAUL

[bitterly]
Yes, in the middle of the night?
No, I have to wait.
Wait until you've finished sitting for your father —
Wait until you've finished at the office.
And while I wait I'm thinking, wondering,
Growing restless. Wondering if it will always be this way,
Waiting for you — wanting you — trying to work —
[He paces back and forth in C].

JAN

But you mustn't think those things.

Christopher's "Death"

PAUL

If you were there, I wouldn't.
But I do, and when I try to work again,
I'm cold and dull. The plans that were
So clear are muddled up, with no idea to them.

JAN

But things won't always be this way, you know.

PAUL

[beginning to work up to a climax of emotion]
Then you've got to change things, now.
It's this indecision that's so maddening;
I want to know you're with me always,
Near me when I want to talk to you,
There to help me when I need you.

JAN

But Paul —

PAUL

[marching toward her and shouting in exasperation]
You love me, don't you?

JAN

Don't shout, dear.

PAUL

[louder, one foot on the steps of the platform, leaning toward her]
Well, I love you, you hear?
And you've got to marry me, right now, tomorrow!

JAN

And I had dreamed of a tender, romantic proposal.

PAUL

[turns and takes few steps down R]

Oh, damn romance! I'm serious.

[comes toward her, pleadingly]

Listen, Jan, you know that commission?

The one on the old colonial house?

I've an idea for remodeling it all —

It's just come to me. The structure I'll leave

Unchanged, its fine simplicity intact —

But I'll rip out the small, impractical windows,

And substitute tall, wide-arched ones to let in

The sunlight and look out on the landscape —

[He has turned away from her, excited over his idea. Now he comes back to earth, turns to her again].

Don't you see how easily I plan things, now,

When you're with me, and listening to them?

JAN

Yes, I see.

PAUL

That commission means my start —

From then on I'll be made.

But I can't work on it without you —

I don't want to work without you.

Don't you see how much I need you?

I can't, I just can't go on this way!

JAN

[softly]

I believe you do need me.

It sort of stuns me to think that I —

That I could matter so very much.

[turns to him almost fiercely]

Oh, Paul, don't you know I'd marry you tonight —

If only —

PAUL

[quietly, as he moves away toward easel]

I know — you mean your father.

JAN

You know what would happen — if I left him?

PAUL

[irritably]

Bertha could stay on and care for him.

JAN

He hasn't any money of his own. My small salary is all —

PAUL

When I get that commission, we'll have lots,
For all of us.

JAN

He wouldn't take it, that way.

PAUL

*[comes back to her]*Oh, why do we talk of money? Everything will be worked out.
Money doesn't matter — it's you and I.

We'll work hard together, Jan, and I'll make my work successful —

I can do it, if you're with me.

[He takes her hand pleadingly].

JAN

Paul, he needs me too. It's not just money.

He needs me as you do, to help him,

Talk to him, and listen to him.

He couldn't work without me.

PAUL

[angrily dropping her hand]

But it doesn't matter to you if I can't work without you.

JAN

Please, Paul. I need you too.

But we're so young and we can wait.

He's old — he's so little time left to try.

PAUL

[walks R]

So we sit back and wait and I grow stagnant,
Lose my promise of success — and you.

JAN

If you two only understood each other —

We could all be happy here — and work together.

PAUL

[at center]

We'd wreck each other's lives.

He and I have nothing at all in common —

So far — excepting failure.

JAN

[She rises from bench and goes to him. They are both now in light of spot #2. Begin to dim strips].

Don't say that, Paul.

PAUL

He's no good as a painter; I'm no good as an architect.

I'll go plugging along till I'm an old man like him,

An old broken-down architect.

Christopher's "Death"

JAN

[trying to lighten his bitter mood, softly places her hand on his arm]
But I wouldn't mind marrying a broken-down architect — I —

PAUL

[wildly jerking away]
Well, I won't give you the chance —
I won't wait any longer.
It may be the noble thing to sit back and let him have you,
To comfort and inspire his remaining days and years,
But I'm not noble, I'm just human.
I love you and I want you, now, and I want my chance to
Be successful. He wouldn't give you up to me and
I won't give you up to him. Do you understand?
You marry me tomorrow or I'm through for good —
I won't come back, I tell you — not even if
I do turn out an old and broken architect.

JAN

Paul, please, you're being dramatic!

PAUL

[His wild outburst cools to injured dignity at this].
Oh, I am, am I?
[coldly quiet]
Very well, I'll summon all my dignity
And make my exit. Remind me to slam the door behind me.
[He marches to the door R; BERTHA comes in at this moment, and he bumps unceremoniously into her].
Get out of my way!
[He glares at her, then recovers].
I'm sorry, Bertha, but when a rejected lover
Is trying to make his exit dramatic,
It's very annoying to crash into a hulk like you.
[He exits, slamming the door].

BERTHA

[staring after him]

Mein Gott, if I did not know him for a clown,
I vould tink he meant dot.

[She chuckles].

JAN

[walks slowly from C to door L]

But he did mean it, Bertha.

[She exits L.]

BERTHA looks after her in surprise, then shrugs her shoulders, chuckles,
and goes about turning out the lamps. She reaches down and tenderly
rubs her feet].

Ach, my feet — dere is so much of dem to hurt;

My shoes — dey squeeze dem in.

*[The room is in shadow; a pale blue light comes through the window.
The old man enters slowly from L. He seems preoccupied, intense].*

BERTHA

You not going to vork some yet tonight,

You vant dat Bertha scold you, yah?

Come, you go right back to bed.

[She meets him at C and takes his arm to lead him off L].

CHRISTOPHER

[waves her away]

No, Bertha. Let me be.

I must — yes, I must work tonight.

[He goes unsteadily to his easel].

BERTHA

But at night you should vork at sleeping;
Tomorrow you can vork at painting, yah?

Christopher's "Death"

CHRISTOPHER

I must work now — tonight.
I feel so sure — so sure I know just what it is
It lacks.

BERTHA

But please —
[*Off R the doorbell rings loudly, insistently*].
Ach, now who is dot?
[*She waddles toward the door*].
You wait, I be right back.
[*The old man pulls up a stool before the painting and gets his palette and brushes. He sits slowly, staring intently at the canvas*].
[BERTHA re-enters].

BERTHA

[*crossing toward door L*]
Fräulein, it iss the crazy Mr. Paul again iss back.
[JAN comes out quickly].
He say to tell you he iss vaiting —
[*She frowns as she tries to remember the words*].
He iss vaiting for to be the architect broke down,
Yah, dot's it. [She is pleased with herself for remembering].
He wants to see you in the living room.
[JAN rushes past BERTHA and disappears through the door R, saying ecstatically, "Paul!"]].

BERTHA

[*looks after JAN, laughing, then turns to CHRISTOPHER*]
The young vuns have right to be so foolish
But you, you go to bed right now.
It iss so late dat even I have got
My head so full of sleep.
[*She rocks her head in her hands*].
[*Spot #4 begins to come up*].

CHRISTOPHER

[as if he had not heard her, still staring at his painting]

Yes, I'm beginning to see it now,
It's right so far — just one thing more.

[with a peremptory gesture in her direction]

Sit down, Bertha, and wait for me,
I will be finished soon.

[BERTHA starts to remonstrate, shakes her head in despair, then goes to armchair R, sits, removes her shoes, breathes sigh of relief, yawns, and closes her eyes].

I've always told you, Bertha, haven't I,

That this picture is my great one,

Will make me great? Remember, Bertha?

[He stares at it; his face lights with excitement].

Yes, I am an artist after all;

Not a painter, but an artist.

See that soft gray shadow in the corner there?

[But BERTHA does not see; she has fallen asleep. A pale blue light shows on the wall at extreme down L, gradually growing brighter].

It's like the background I have painted here.

But it's not a shadow; it has a shape and form.

I see it clear and quite distinct.

That warm glow of light — I knew it was there,

But I couldn't seem to find it.

[Spot begins to move around wall toward him].

It seems to belong here — if I can get it so.

[He makes a few strokes with his brush].

It seems to flow from behind my paler grays;

It's like some music, perhaps a hymn,

But can one paint the sound of lovely music?

How hard it seems to get it — it's nearer now,

I see it plainly. It's what I've tried for

All these years. It's come to me —

It's — why, it's that something —

It is —

[He leans forward, his face transfigured; as if summoning all his strength, he makes a careful sweeping line across his canvas. The light, now above him, is suddenly extinguished. His palette and brush

Christopher's "Death"

fall to the floor as he slumps over on the worktable, his arm hanging limply down. There is a moment of quiet; the strips are brought up slightly. Then the door opens. JAN and PAUL come slowly in, arm in arm, smiling at each other].

JAN

So it all ended happily after all.
[*They pause, down R*].

PAUL

But it's not ending; just beginning.
[*They kiss*].

JAN

[*laughing, points to Christopher*]
Look, he's gone to sleep; still at his easel.

PAUL

With Bertha keeping him company in dreams.
[*JAN tiptoes over to her father; PAUL goes to BERTHA and is about to tickle her nose when JAN's voice startles him*].

JAN

Paul! Paul!
[*He looks up startled, then comes quickly to her side. She points to the picture, speaking slowly*].
He — he's not — asleep!
[*PAUL looks over her shoulder at the painting. He reaches out and takes JAN's hand. At last he speaks in awe*].

PAUL

He did it!

JAN

It's — beautiful!
[*She bursts into tears, hides her head on his shoulder; he puts his arms about her, still staring at the picture as the curtain falls*].

CURTAIN

Suggestions to Producers

THE CYCLORAMA SETTING FOR THE ONE-ACT comedy, *The Cue He Knew*, may be arranged for one window opening only. This will not change the action of the play as given in the directions. If space is allowed for entrances and exits down right and left, doors there are unnecessary. Leave an opening at the center in the rear of the cyclorama. Insert in this opening a window flat or a window piece. A suggestion for the backdrop, which shows through the windows, is the skyline of close tenement housetops in a crowded city. A line strung with faded garments partly obscures the backdrop.

The audience should be made to understand that this is a room on the top floor of a very old building. Remnants of a former glory should be evidenced by the well-designed baseboard, which can be painted on the cardboard or regular flats in the other types of settings. The baseboard should be of a dark brown paint suggesting mahogany, and the woodwork around the doors and windows should be painted to suggest a somewhat elaborate carving. On the walls is a large-figured wallpaper which has become dulled in color with age and dirt. This effect can be developed by first stenciling on the pattern, and then toning down the color by spattering. It is unnecessary to develop a very even spatter. If a gradation is developed, let it be from a light shade at the bottom of the flats to a darker hue toward the top. Colors for spattering can best be made by darkening and dulling some of the same colors used in painting the wallpaper pattern.

Furnishings for this set should be worn looking. The window curtains look as though long ago they were beautiful, fine lace. Now they are limp and stringy and full of holes. The red, checkered tablecloth is tattered,

LIGHTING

Outside the window the light is bright, suggesting midafternoon, but in the room the light is dim. Floods at the rear on each side of the windows will sufficiently illuminate that portion of the stage. Border lights, augmented by spots to cover the main playing areas, will illumine the room sufficiently. As much as possible allow the lights to play upon the characters rather than upon the scenery.

SOUND EFFECTS

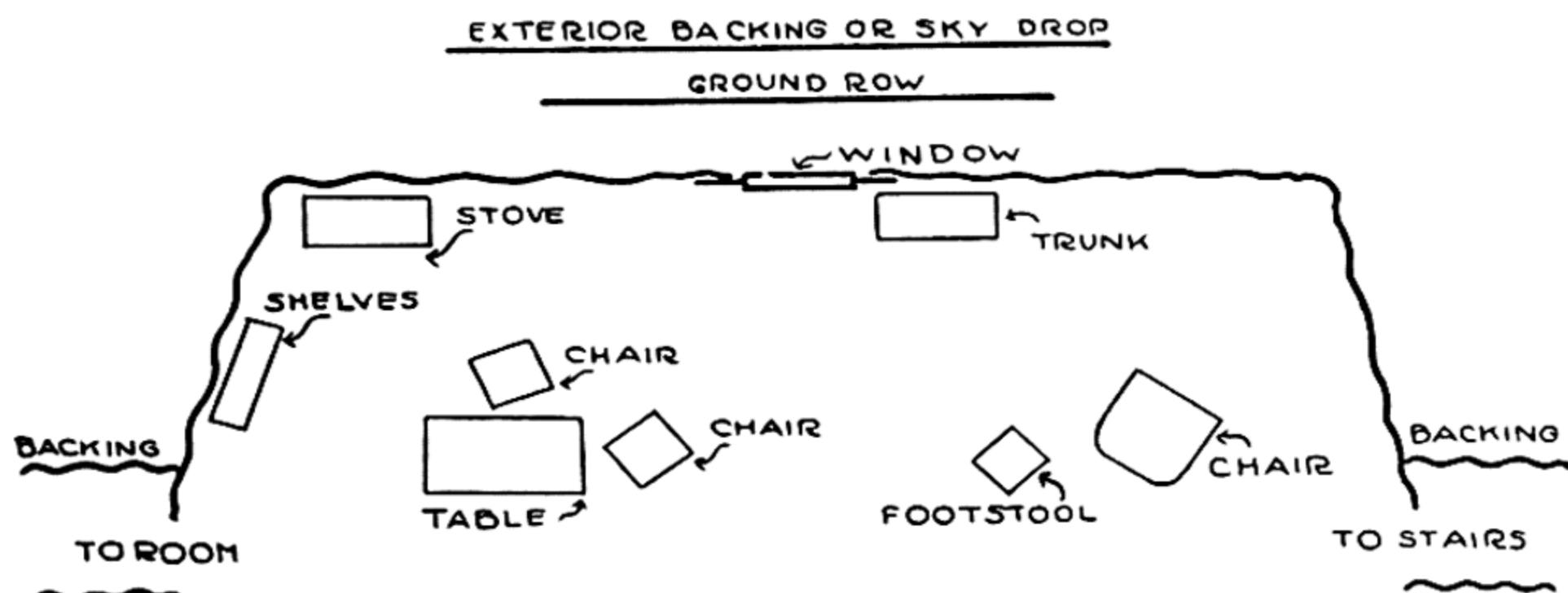
Music, which comes from Mrs. Murphy's radio, can be supplied by a phonograph off stage. Place the source of this sound so that it seems to come from the rear instead of from the front of the stage. Additional music can be used effectively for the scene toward the end of the play between Mrs. Grigsby and Cyril Ainsworth. Here the music should be somber. An electric phonograph with volume control is best for this effect. That type of phonograph or, if you choose, musicians off stage, can take care of this sound.

PROPERTIES

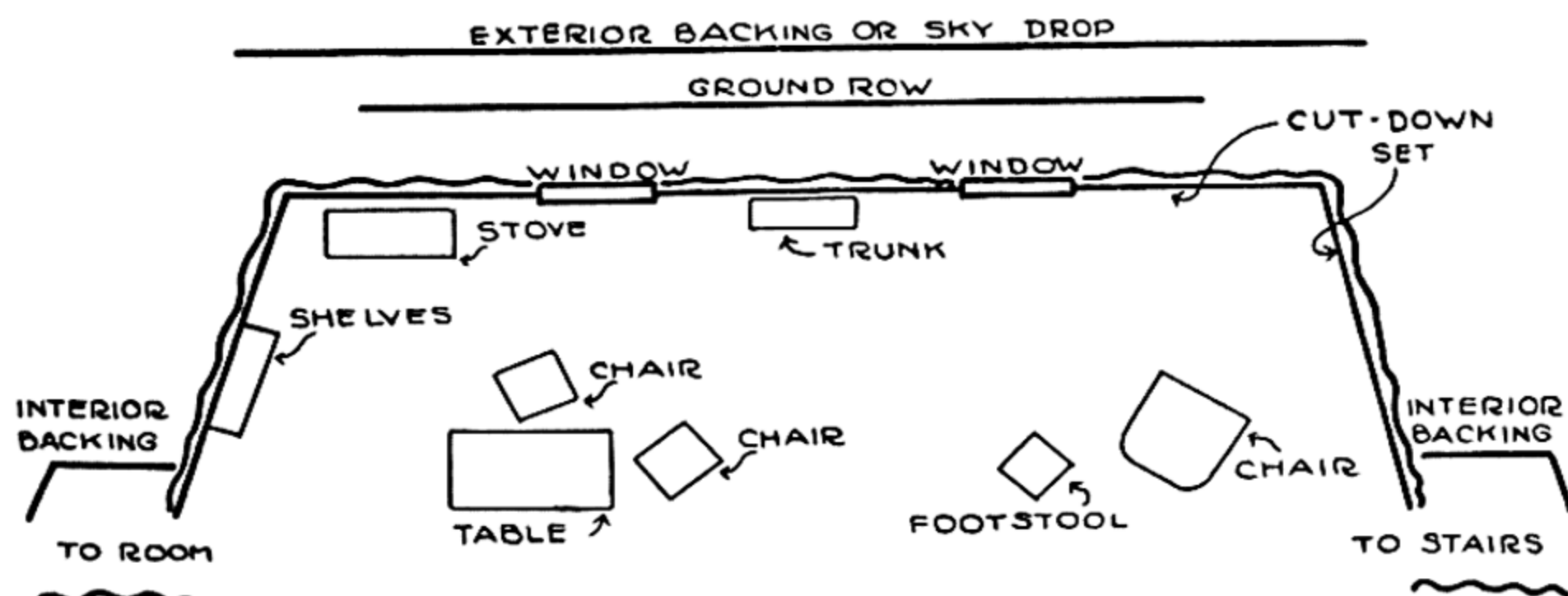
Old-fashioned round-topped trunk
One old-fashioned armchair or Morris chair
One footstool
Small kitchen table
Two straight chairs
One gas plate or kerosene stove
Old-fashioned wall cupboard or shelves
Scrapbook with newspaper clippings
Velvet or plush jewel box or case with medal
Pan of stew
Bowl
Flower pot with flower

COSTUMES

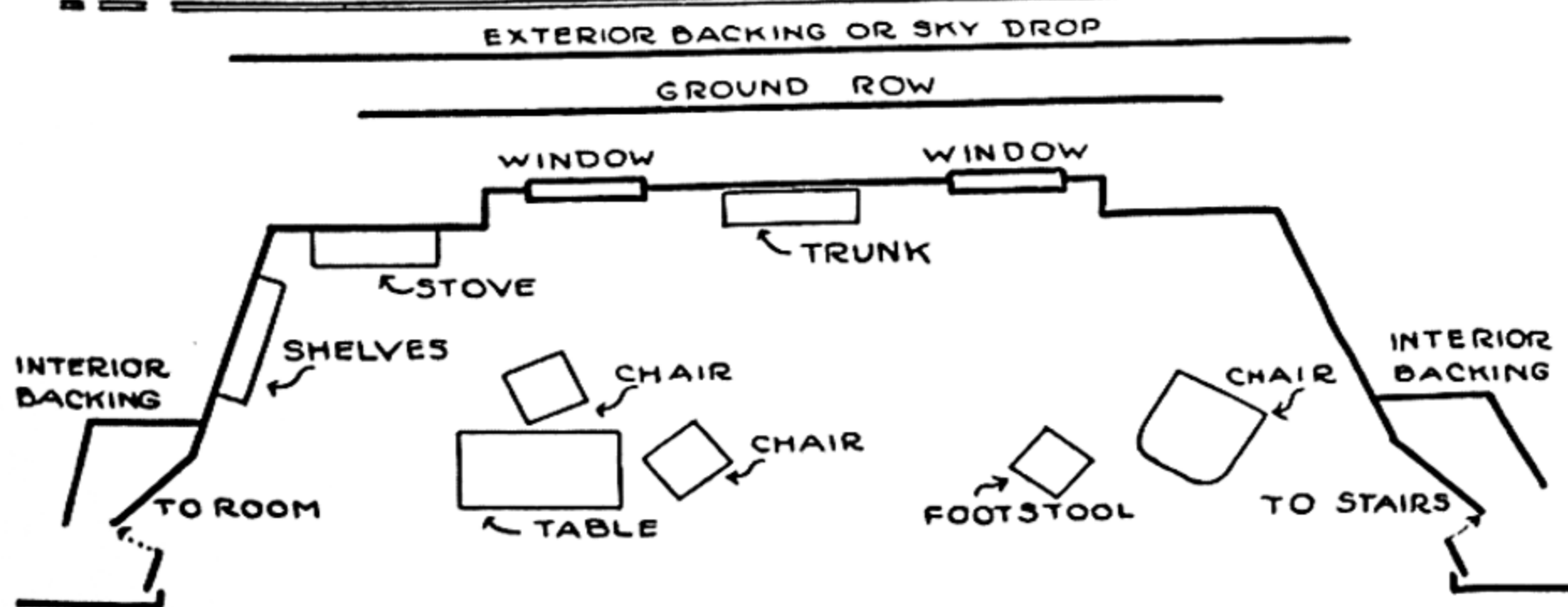
Ainsworth. Black frock coat. Dark trousers. White, wing collar, if possible, with short, black flowing tie. Broad-brimmed black hat. Brass-headed cane.



CYCLOPAMA SETTING

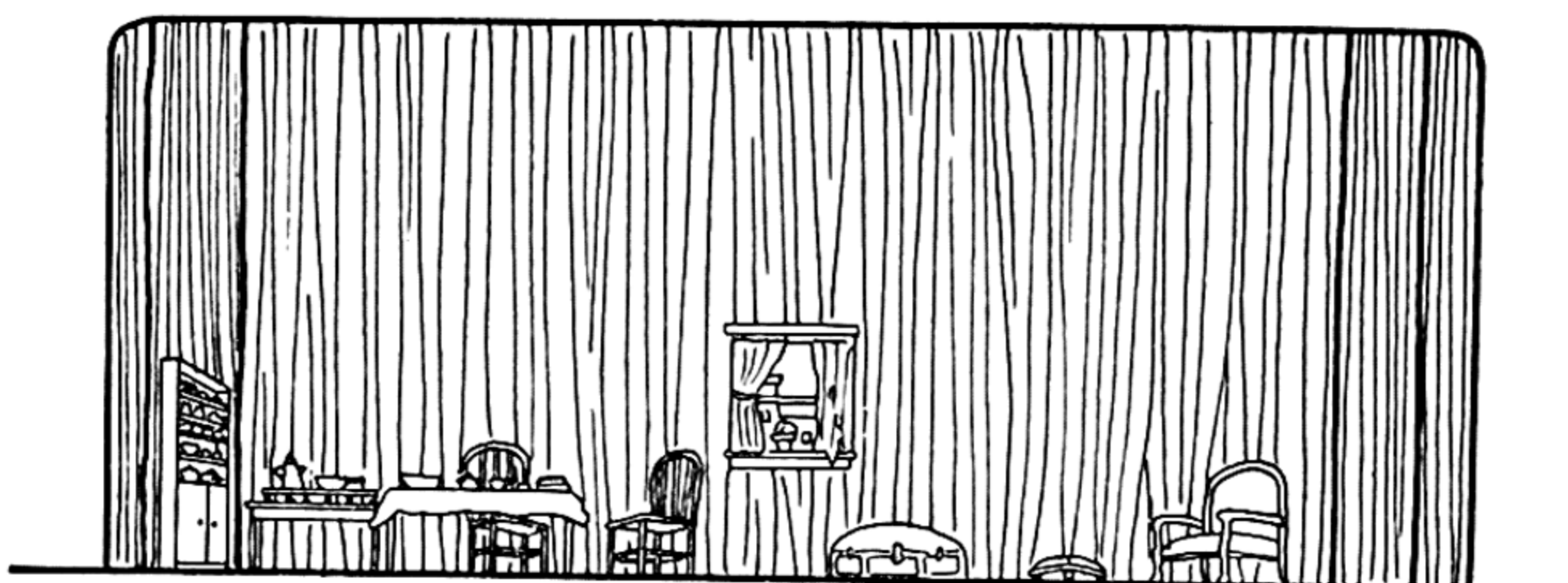


CARDDBOARD SETTING

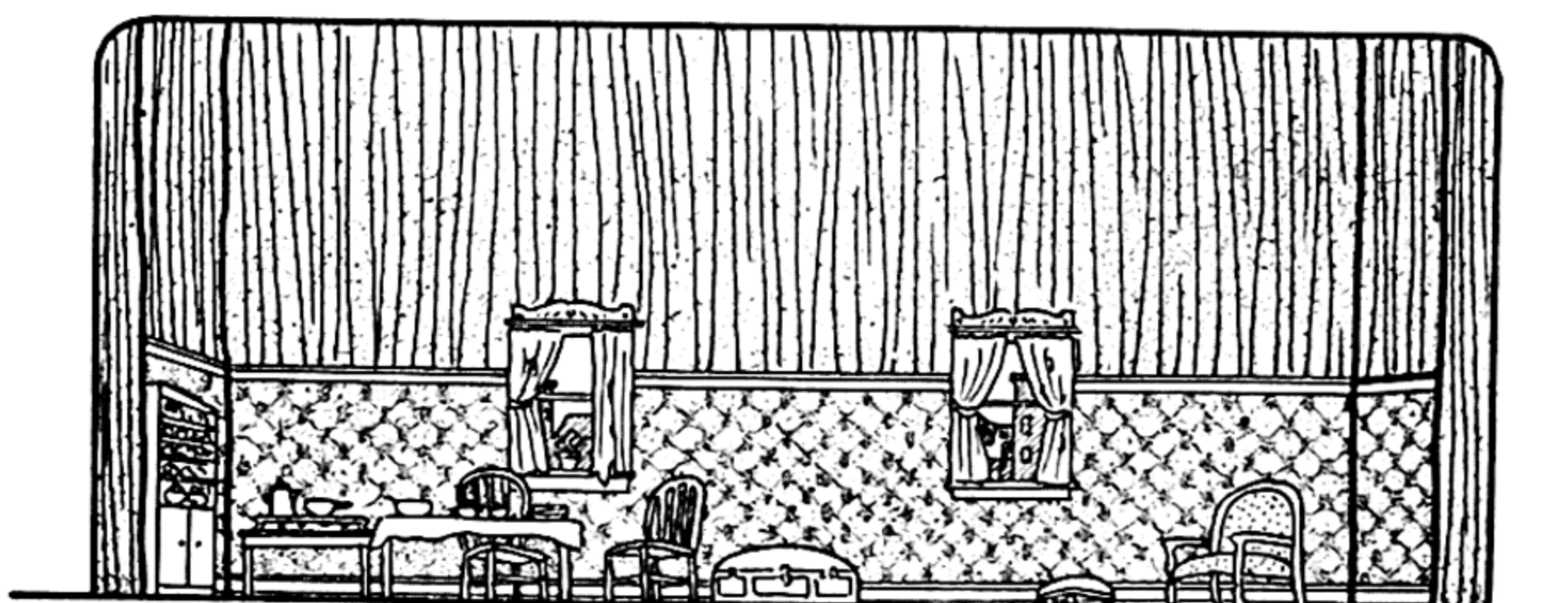


COMPLETE FLAT SETTING THE CUE HE KNEW

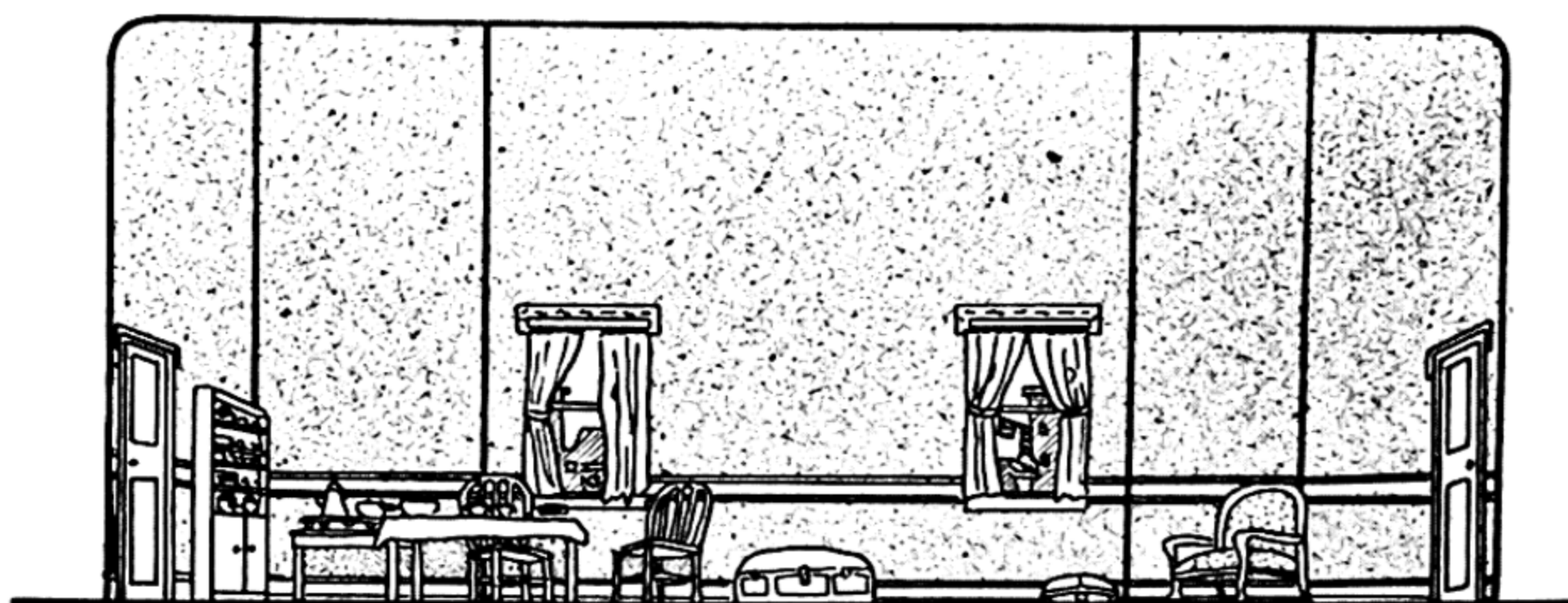




CYCLORAMA SETTING



CARDBOARD SETTING



COMPLETE FLAT SETTING
THE CUE HE KNEW



Scotty. Worn trousers, short or long. Old shirt or sweater.

Mrs. Grigsby. Long, full house dress, with sleeves rolled up. Big apron.

Mr. Lutts. Fashionable, well-cut suit. Shoes and hat of latest mode.

Mr. Hoffman. Well-cut, neat, business suit. Perhaps horn-rimmed spectacles.

Mr. Soams. Dark trousers. Blue shirt with sleeves rolled up. Heavy shoes. Butcher's apron.

A Woman. Trim, tailored suit of dark color. Dark, mannish hat. Nose glasses with ribbon.

MAKE-UP

Ainsworth. Old-age foundation grease paint on face, neck, and hands. Hollows in cheeks, cheekbones highlighted. Wrinkles in forehead, around eyes, mouth, nose, on chin and neck. No rouge or lipstick. Eyebrows bushed by applying grease paint and powder and brushing backwards. Dark powder over all. Put hollows and wrinkles in hands. Hair and eyebrows gray or white (hair rather long and unkempt).

Scotty. Juvenile foundation on face, neck, and hands. Slight touch of rouge and lipstick. Light powder over all.

Mrs. Grigsby. Ruddy foundation grease paint on face, neck, hands, and arms. Few wrinkles in forehead, around eyes and mouth. Redden cheeks, not lips. Reddish powder over all. Hair in knot at back or on top of head, with stray wisps falling down.

Mr. Lutts. Middle-age foundation grease paint. Few wrinkles around eyes. Temples grayed slightly. Slightly sallow powder over all.

Mr. Hoffman. Same as for Mr. Lutts.

Mr. Soams. Reddish foundation grease paint on face, neck, hands, and arms. Hard wrinkles around eyes, nose, mouth, and chin. Deepen frown line on forehead and between eyes. Bristling black mustache.

A Woman. Middle-age foundation grease paint (not too pink). Few wrinkles on forehead, around eyes, and mouth. No rouge or lipstick. Accentuate eyebrows in hard, straight line. Powder over all.

THE CUE HE KNEW



SCOTTY



CYRIL AINSWORTH



BILL COLLECTOR



MRS. GRIGSBY

MR.
SOAMES



MAKEUP



MR. LUTTS



The Cue He Knew

A Comedy in One Act

CHARACTERS

Cyril Ainsworth. A shabby but distinguished old man who has retained the dignity and poise of his former successful days as an actor.

Scotty Ainsworth. A lively boy of twelve. He is patient with his grandfather with whom he lives, but beneath his deference shows a great desire to be active.

Mrs. Grigsby. A jolly, good-natured, motherly woman slightly past middle age. Her uneducated but tender heart is moved with compassion one minute, and stirred to action the next, when those she loves are concerned.

Mr. Lutts. A man with much assurance. He speaks definitely from the corner of his mouth, and seems always to take too much for granted.

Mr. Hoffman. The obsequious shadow of Mr. Lutts.

Mr. Soams. A stodgy, slow-witted but determined groceryman.

A woman. A mannish woman whose prim and abrupt character qualifies her very well for her work as a bill collector.

THE TIME: *A hot afternoon last summer*

THE SCENE

The room is meagerly furnished with a kitchen table and two wooden chairs at the right, an old trunk between the two windows at the rear, and a Morris chair with a footstool on the left. At right rear, next to the wall, is a gas plate. There is a small cupboard near by. On each side of the stage there is a door: the one to the right leads to a bedroom, the one to the left leads to the hallway and stairs. Through the windows at the rear we can see the tops of tenement houses across the street.

Curtains as ragged as those we see in this room are hung from the windows we see over there. Someone has just strung a washing out on the fire escape across the street.

On the kitchen table there is a red, checkered cloth. In the window to the left is a cracked flower pot with a pitifully scrawny geranium bravely attempting to bloom. Beside the Morris chair is a crumpled newspaper.

The walls of the room are covered with a dark and sooty wallpaper which might have looked well ten years ago.

As the curtains open, Cyril Ainsworth is seated in the chair at the left. Scotty sits on the footstool near him, to the right.

AINSWORTH. Ah, Scotty, those were the days! And listen to this one, my boy — this one is taken from the *Gazette*, let me see — [*squints at date on clipping*] thirty-three years ago. Ah, that was when I was in my prime, Scotty, hailed as the premier actor of the theatrical world.

SCOTTY. Uhuh. [*The boy is unconsciously feigning attention to the old man. He is engrossed in folding a piece of paper to make a flyer*].

AINSWORTH. Listen to this, Scotty! “Cyril Ainsworth, beloved star of the stage, the supreme interpreter of Shakespearean roles, last night brought an audience to its feet with his incomparable portrayal of Hamlet. Ainsworth rose to magnificent heights, leaving his audience shamefacedly shaken until —

SCOTTY. [*He lets fly the paper plane and watches it sail*]. “— they roused to clamor in wild acclaim this superb and immortal artist of the stage.”

AINSWORTH. [*not noticing him*] Ah, Scotty, if I could only reincarnate that one-time glory in you! If I could impart all that I have learned to you, and live again through you the life of a great actor! [*sighs deeply*]

SCOTTY. [*plaintively, as he goes to pick up his flyer*] But Grandfather, I think I'd rather be an aviator. It don't take so long to learn that. I wouldn't mind being an actor, and have the president maybe give me a medal like you, but you gotta rehearse and rehearse. An aviator don't hafta —

AINSWORTH. [*sharply reproachful*] Stuff and nonsense, boy! You were born for the stage, Scotty. You were destined to

sway the people, as I did — once. [*pauses, then smiles*] Some day you shall have a press book of articles even thicker than this one, eh?

SCOTTY. [*without interest*] Uhuh. [*goes to window up R*]

AINSWORTH. But never without a great deal of work, Scotty. [*turns pages*] Ah, here are pictures of me in my best role.

SCOTTY. [*coming from window to point at the picture from over AINSWORTH'S shoulder*] I like that one where you got the tight pants on and the sword better than any.

AINSWORTH. Ah, yes. "Cyril Ainsworth as Prince Hamlet." Let me show you how I used to do this dueling scene from *Hamlet*. [*gets up, walks past stool to C*] Critics often said this was my most powerful scene. Ah, listen! Mrs. Murphy's radio is playing a symphony! We'll have music with the scene. [*The old man assumes character of Hamlet, drawing himself up, brandishing his cane as a foil. He thrusts at SCOTTY as the foe*]. "Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally; I pray you, pass with your best violence — I am afraid you make a wanton of me —" [*He makes a violent stab at SCOTTY, who is excitedly watching, unconsciously warding off the supposed blows. A sudden creak of age stops the old man as he is about to slay the childlike Laertes. His voice breaks; he clears his throat apologetically as he walks shakily back to his chair down L*]. Of course, you understand my voice is not so good as it once was, and my legs [*He sits with effort*] are neither so sturdy nor so supple.

SCOTTY. [*sits on stool*] Why didn't they use guns and get it over quick?

AINSWORTH. [*businesslike*] 'Tis neither here nor there to discuss the relative quality of weapons. Come, let us continue with our rehearsal.

SCOTTY. I wouldn't mind being in a show if I could shoot a gun.

AINSWORTH. [*disregarding Scotty's comment*] Yesterday you handled the pathetic mood badly. You must become more adept. I want you to be able to express pathos; you must get tears into your voice, pleading into your gestures. [*He illustrates these qualities as he speaks the words*]. Now listen to these lines, and watch me closely so you can do it after me. "There is no mercy in heaven nor on earth, or how could this tragic

thing happen to me? I have done no wrong, why must I suffer? [*raises arms in supplication, bringing them down slightly on 'earth,' then down completely and around in a sweeping gesture, finally pointing to himself on 'me'*] Life is one black chasm of despair; no hearts soften toward me in my distress; there is no one to whom I can turn in my hour of need. What am I to do? [*The old man is wrapped up in the lines he is giving, putting sufficient feeling into them to affect any listener except the disinterested SCOTTY, who is about to catch a fly*]. I have paid and paid — I can pay no more." [*He drops his head in a gesture of despair, then turns to SCOTTY in businesslike manner*]. Now remember, Scotty, as you say the lines, get tears into your voice, pleading into your gestures — remember you are the picture of tragic despair!

SCOTTY. [*gets up lifelessly from the stool, repeats the lines dully, still watching the fly as he raises his arms in poor imitation of his grandfather*] "There is no mercy in heaven nor on earth, or how could this tragic thing —" [*His voice rises to singsong climax on the word 'tragic'*].

AINSWORTH. [*impatiently interrupts, pounding the floor with cane*] No, no, no! Scotty, how many times must I tell you not to overemphasize? Do not say "tragic" — you must not saw the air with your arm, thus, [*waves his arms through the air*] nor must you tear a passion to tatters. It must have strength, and you must feel what you are saying. Now listen to me again! [*again raises arms in supplication and completes gesture*] "There is no mercy in heaven nor on earth, or how could this tragic thing happen to me?" There, do you see? Now try it again.

SCOTTY. [*still without feeling, but with better gestures, rattles off the lines*] "There is no mercy in heaven nor on earth, or how could this tragic thing happen to me?" [*As he finishes with his arms and head down, he turns his head up to the side to see if he has pleased his grandfather*].

AINSWORTH. [*sighing*] Hum, that is not so bad, [*SCOTTY gives sigh of relief*] yet it is not good, my boy. [*look of disappointment passes over SCOTTY's face*] You have much to learn, much to learn.

SCOTTY. Yes, Grandfather. [*catches a fly and reseats himself on stool*]

AINSWORTH. [*hopefully*] But let us try something else, eh,

my boy? Now you shall be angry, eh? You shall show me that you feel strong, violent anger, working up from cold wrath to a fury! A tempest of rage! Wild, vicious anger! [*He becomes excited as he demonstrates to SCOTTY*]. Come now, remember the lines I have written for you?

SCOTTY. I remember them, Grandfather, but I don't feel angry. How can I get angry all of a sudden when I don't feel that way at all?

AINSWORTH. [*catching up his remark quickly*] There it is, my boy, there it is! That is the whole secret of acting! You must make your listeners believe you are angry, convince them that you are uncontrollably angry, even if you have nothing to be angry about. Come, try it; we are wasting time.

SCOTTY. Well, I'm ready.

AINSWORTH. Remember that haughty pose I taught you? [*SCOTTY assumes haughty pose*]. Now I'll give you your cue. Remember, you must pick it up quickly. Ready.

SCOTTY. Ready.

AINSWORTH. All right. "I'll bend your will. You must —"

SCOTTY. Er, lemme see — oh yes, "I shall never —"

AINSWORTH. [*interrupting*] Scotty, Scotty, you didn't take your cue quickly. Now don't miss it this time. "I'll bend your will. You must —"

SCOTTY. [*reciting glibly but unfeelingly*] "I shall never do it. Never would I yield to one so low, so despicable as you, you fiend. You groveling, mercenary demon! You are a human monster, crushing and destroying those about you. You are cruel, grasping, sinister —"

AINSWORTH. [*He has been following the lines, unconsciously going through the facial expressions for SCOTTY. Now he interrupts*]. More vehemence, Scotty, more power! Like this. "You fiend, you monster, you demon!" See? Work up to a climax. Build up and up in your tirade until you reach your highest point of fury — carry your audience with you, do you understand? "Cruel, grasping, sinister!" [*He repeats the line, increasing the emphasis with each word*].

SCOTTY. [*wearily as he slumps on stool*] I see, Grandfather, but I don't feel like it. Let's come back to it later.

AINSWORTH. [*obviously disappointed*] Very well. We will

come back to it later. But we shall try harder then, eh? You must learn to be able to call forth any emotion on a moment's notice. That is one of the arts of the stage, my boy.

SCOTTY. Yes, Grandfather.

AINSWORTH. And you must take up your cues more quickly, Scotty; that is all-important. A good actor never misses a cue.

SCOTTY. I try, Grandfather. Honest, I wanta be a good actor and be popular like you were. [*gets up and goes over to table to deposit a fly*]

AINSWORTH. [*kindly patient*] I know you try, my boy. You will be a good actor. It will come to you. But now you are tired. That will do for today. [*SCOTTY brightens visibly*]. Perhaps I should take you to the theater tonight. Would you like that, Scotty?

SCOTTY. [*eagerly*] Oh, gee, that would be swell!

AINSWORTH. Very well, then, to the theater we will go.

SCOTTY. [*stepping from table R to C*] The movies, Grandfather? Will we see a western with lots of shooting and jumping on horses and —

AINSWORTH. Trash! Trash! All that is trash, my boy. There is no art in the cinema, in those freakish displays of cheap heroism.

SCOTTY. But, Grandfather, I think western movies are swell!

AINSWORTH. Ah, but the play at the theater tonight is *Macbeth*, Scotty. *Macbeth!* Ah, I remember when I played *Macbeth*, Scotty! Why, it was for that role that I received the medal, the honorary award from the Academy of Dramatics. [*He rises from his chair, goes over to trunk, rear C, takes out case containing medal. SCOTTY holds lid up for him. He pats it fondly*]. The president himself bestowed it on me, Scotty, think of that! I still can see it, that night when he called me up before that great audience and pinned on my breast the emblem significant of the highest honor in the theatrical world.

SCOTTY. Uhuh.

AINSWORTH. Here, let me show you. It has the official seal of the Academy on it. [*opens case with excited fingers*] Look! [*lifts medal proudly*]

SCOTTY. [*paying no attention to the medal, but inspecting the case*] Say, Grandfather, the case would make a swell box to keep

my dead fly collection in. Looky, I could stick a pin through them and fasten 'em to this velvet and — [*takes case to table R and inspects it*]

AINSWORTH. [*not noticing SCOTTY, still gazes at the medal*] And the medal is fashioned of pure gold, Scotty, solid gold. There was never such a fine emblem given anyone else in all the history of the Academy of Dramatic Art.

SCOTTY. [*eagerly*] Can I have the case sometime, Grandfather?

AINSWORTH. [*not listening*] Perhaps, my boy, perhaps.

SCOTTY. [*musingly*] Maybe there will be some flies in the theater tonight that I can catch.

AINSWORTH. [*aroused from his reverie*] The theater? Ah yes, I can hardly wait to see *Macbeth* again. The opening scene of the witches is always so compelling. [*He comes down C, and with his cane stirs imaginary kettle, mixing magic potions*]. "Double, double, toil and trouble, fire burn and cauldron bubble."

SCOTTY. [*watching excitedly*] Witches? Do they do any magic tricks, Grandfather — make anything disappear?

AINSWORTH. [*smiling*] You just wait and see, my boy. And the banquet scene, where Banquo's ghost stalks in, weirdly tall and opalescent! [*He walks on the line, with upstage arm straight in front, as if there were no movement in upper part of body. As he comes out of the pose and turns toward SCOTTY, SCOTTY jumps back slightly, as the spell is broken*].

SCOTTY. [*excited more by this*] Ghosts, too? Gee, Grandfather, I think I'll like it. I know I will. What time do we go?

AINSWORTH. [*beaming*] I knew you would want to see *Macbeth*. Now as soon as I finish my little errand, we shall go!

SCOTTY. [*suddenly crestfallen and taking a step close to AINSWORTH*] But, Grandfather, how can we go? We haven't got enough money to buy our dinner. How can we buy tickets for the show?

AINSWORTH. I had not thought of that, Scotty. [*strokes chin, then sighs*] But I will manage some way. You must not miss *Macbeth*.

SCOTTY. [*sadly*] But there just isn't any way of getting money, Grandfather.

AINSWORTH. Now don't you fret about it, Scotty. [*hopeful*]

idea comes to him] Perhaps they will remember me at the theater — remember when I was their headliner, eh? And perhaps they will offer us seats in a box? Now, what would you say to that, Scotty?

SCOTTY. [*dubiously*] Do you suppose they might? I do want to go.

AINSWORTH. Well, I can try. Yes, I will fix it some way. [*He bustles about at the trunk, getting ready to go. A knock is heard at the door*].

SCOTTY. [*He crosses toward the door L, then stops short, frightened*]. Grandfather! That must be the groceryman. He was here yesterday and the day before. I forgot to tell you.

AINSWORTH. [*pausing in his preparations*] I don't know quite what to do. We have no money to pay him. Well, let him in. We might be able to make him understand.

SCOTTY. Not Mr. Soams! [*He goes slowly to the door and opens it. The landlady enters with a covered pan*].

MRS. GRIGSBY. [*bustles in and over to table*] Landsakes, now if I didn't calcy late jest about right on you two. You haven't et your dinner er my eyes deceive me. [*looks at bare table*] And ain't I opportune with this!

SCOTTY. [*sniffing and following her over to table*] Um, something to eat!

MRS. GRIGSBY. [*puts pan on stove, goes to cupboard and gets bowl, talking all the while*] Now, I says to myself, I did, as we wuz getting up from the dinner table, "Now, there's all that nice stew jest settin' there and it won't be et by nobody." Then I says to myself, "I'll jest trot upstairs with it and maybe Mr. Ainsworth and Scotty kin do away with it." I hates to throw things out, I do. [*She fills the bowl from the pan and brings it to the table*].

AINSWORTH. Now, that's very kind of you, Mrs. Grigsby. Scotty and I were so busy rehearsing that we had really forgotten all about dinner. Can you imagine that? [*He has a piece of newspaper in his hand as if he were going to wrap something up*].

MRS. GRIGSBY. Tch! Tch! Sakes alive. You two is not responsible. You need someone to mother you. Forgetting about your dinner! My, my!

AINSWORTH. Besides, we had quite a large breakfast and we really wouldn't want much dinner, would we, Scotty? [*He is busy at the trunk wrapping up something with the newspaper*].

SCOTTY. [*looks longingly at stew, answers unconvincingly*] No, I guess not.

AINSWORTH. Anyway, it's bad to eat heavily before seeing a play — we're going to the theater tonight, Mrs. Grigsby.

SCOTTY. [*at L of table*] Yes, Mrs. Grigsby, we're going to see *Macbeth* and it has witches and ghosts in it!

MRS. GRIGSBY. [*at R of table*] Now, ain't that jest grand! You ain't been in many a long time, and I wuz jest sayin' to myself the other night, I says, "Them two ought to get out more to see them plays. Mr. Ainsworth loves 'em so." Why I can recall the days when you wuz at some theayter ever night, Mr. Ainsworth, that you wuz.

SCOTTY. [*leans over to smell stew*] Umum, gee, that smells good, Mrs. Grigsby. I'm awful hungry.

MRS. GRIGSBY. Here, you jest set down and start in on it afore it gets cold, child. [*helps him sit at C of table, facing audience*]

SCOTTY. Do you mind if I eat some, Grandfather?

AINSWORTH. No, Scotty, you may eat. [*He puts the package he has wrapped under his arm, picks up his hat and cane from his chair down L, and turns to them*]. Well, I must be on my errand. [*His glance falls on the flower pot in the window*]. Ah, Mrs. Grigsby, our one floral enterprise has blossomed forth. It shall be plucked for you. [*He goes over and breaks off the flower*]. Its aroma is sweet, but not so enticing as that of the stew. Allow me, Mrs. Grigsby. [*He presents the flower with a gallant bow as she comes from R of table to down C*].

MRS. GRIGSBY. [*touched, hides her face with a corner of her big apron*] Ain't that jest like you, Mr. Ainsworth. Allays thinkin' of the nicest things! But I'd rather see it in your buttonhole, Mr. Ainsworth. It reminds me of the days when you started out for the theayter, all decked out in a tailed coat and tall hat, with a gardeny in your buttonhole!

AINSWORTH. Yes, Mrs. Grigsby, the days of my glory!

MRS. GRIGSBY. Here, let me fix it. [*puts flower in his buttonhole*]

AINSWORTH. [*draws himself up proudly, pretends to settle tall hat*

and swing cane] Ahem, is my cab waiting? [*They all laugh; then AINSWORTH drops pose and becomes serious*]. I won't be gone long, Scotty. [*starts for door L, stops short and turns*] So good of you to bring the stew, Mrs. Grigsby; you are always so thoughtful. [*goes to door*] And when I come back we shall get ready to go to the theater, eh, Scotty? [*He exits*].

SCOTTY. [*with lifted spoon*] What was that Grandfather wrapped up and took with him? It looked like that case I asked him for to put my fly collection in.

MRS. GRIGSBY. [*comes back to L of table*] Ain't that what he keeps that decoration in, what some king or somebody give him?

SCOTTY. Yes, his award from the Academy. He thinks more of that than anything he's got.

MRS. GRIGSBY. You don't 'spose he's gonna take that to a pawn shop, do you, like he's took so many of them fine things?

SCOTTY. [*busily eating*] Oh, no, Grandfather wouldn't pawn that.

MRS. GRIGSBY. He might, if it meant money fer him and you to go to the theayter. Landsakes, I believe he'd do most anything to git to see a real play. I remember when he didn't have to worry 'bout how he wuz gonna get in; he had to worry 'bout how he wuz gonna get out.

SCOTTY. Gee, Grandfather must have been a top guy in those days.

MRS. GRIGSBY. He coulda had the whole city fer his own ef he hadda wanted it. Landsakes, how people did dote on him. Used to foller him right to his front door; that's when he lived in them fine front rooms on the first floor. And he wuz as kind as he wuz great, too. He wuz always bringin' me some fine present as if I wuz a real lady —.

SCOTTY. [*soberly, turning toward her*] And those were the days when he could pay the rent, too, Mrs. Grigsby, and now we haven't paid you for such a long time.

MRS. GRIGSBY. Now, now, lamb. [*pats his shoulder*] Don't you worry 'bout any rent you owe me. Ain't I always been jest as pleased as punch to have you livin' here? Landsakes, you're jest like my own, you and Mr. Ainsworth both, been with me all these years —.

SCOTTY. [*brightly*] We'll get some money sometime, maybe

soon. If Grandfather ever gets another part in a show, and I bet he does, 'cause he's such a swell actor, then things will be different, and we'll have some money.

MRS. GRIGSBY. And don't I say that very thing to myself most every day? Why, I says to myself, I says, "Some day that grand old man's gonna run into good fortune like he deserves and —" [*A knock on the door interrupts her*].

SCOTTY. [*with spoon in hand*] Oh, gee, I wonder if that's the groceryman. [*gets up from the table hesitatingly*] Will you stay for a minute, Mrs. Grigsby? I'm sorta scared maybe —.

MRS. GRIGSBY. [*reassuringly nods and places hands on hips belligerently*] You bet I'll stay right by you. [*SCOTTY goes slowly to the door and opens it cautiously. MRS. GRIGSBY follows him to a position slightly up LC*].

LUTTS. Is this where Cyril Ainsworth lives?

SCOTTY. [*opens the door wider, answers dubiously to the two men who stand there*] Why, yes, sir, but — well, he isn't home right now; he's just gone on an errand.

LUTTS. You expect him back soon?

HOFFMAN. Yes, you expect him back soon?

SCOTTY. He won't be gone long, I'm sure.

LUTTS. Might we come in and wait for him? It's very important that we see him.

SCOTTY. [*hesitatingly*] Why, yes, I guess so. Yes, certainly, come in.

LUTTS. Thank you. [*The men enter*].

SCOTTY. Will you sit down? [*He indicates armchair down L. HOFFMAN carefully dusts the chair for his employer and waits for him to sit before he sits in the straight chair which SCOTTY brings from L side of table*].

SCOTTY. [*at a loss as to what to do*] If Mrs. Grigsby wouldn't mind taking care of you, I could run out and find Grandfather. I'm sure he hasn't gone far.

MRS. GRIGSBY. [*standing back C*] Yes, you run along and find him, lamb — [*looks belligerently at men*] I'm a great hand at takin' care of grocerymen!

LUTTS. I beg your pardon?

SCOTTY. [*as he exits running*] I'll be back in just a few minutes.

LUTTS. [*looks after the boy*] A very attractive child, I should say.

HOFFMAN. [*agreeing eagerly*] Yes, Mr. Lutts, very attractive.

MRS. GRIGSBY. [*forgetting her animosity for the moment and coming down between the two men*] Well, I guess you said it right. That boy's gonna be somebody, jest like his grandfather. Why, I says to myself jest the other day, I says —

LUTTS. [*interrupting what he knows will be a long story*] He lives with Mr. Ainsworth, I gather?

MRS. GRIGSBY. That he does, and has fer nigh on to ten years, ever since Mr. Ainsworth took him in after the poor lamb's mother died of fever. And he's raised that boy better 'n I coulda done it myself, that he has.

LUTTS. So the boy is Ainsworth's grandson?

MRS. GRIGSBY. That he is, and Mr. Ainsworth's done everything fer him, too. When he wuz in his prime — Mr. Ainsworth wuz a fine actor once, you know.

LUTTS. [*pretending ignorance*] You don't say so?

MRS. GRIGSBY. [*taking a step R toward LUTTS*] You mean to say you ain't never heard of Cyril Ainsworth? Landsakes, he wuz the most famous man in this town, he wuz. Well, as I wuz sayin', he started teachin' that boy and doin' fer him, and the times when he didn't have no money or no shows to work in, or — [*suddenly interrupts herself*] say, you know the public ain't smart or they'd never let Mr. Ainsworth git away from the stage. Why, I wuz asayin' to myself jest the other day, I wuz, I says — [*A loud voice from below calls plaintively, "Emmy, oh, Emmy!"*] MRS. GRIGSBY sighs in exasperation]. Good land, there's Pa. Now what does he want? [*more as if talking to herself, forgetting the men*] Oh, I reckon as how it's time for him to have his foot bath, and if I don't go and help him, he'll scald his toes off. [*Voice calls again insistently and loudly: "Emmy, Emmy, come here!"*] MRS. GRIGSBY backs in embarrassment toward door L]. I hope you two won't mind ef I be running along, I, ah — I'm expectin' company. [*The two men rise courteously. This flusters her and she flounders for words as she edges toward the door*]. Yes, I'm expectin' company, — I — ah, I'm expectin' er, ah [*A thought comes to her and she finishes triumphantly*]. I'm expectin' the groceryman!

LUTTS. We can take care of ourselves quite well, thank you.

MRS. GRIGSBY. [*still backing slowly and awkwardly to the door*] Well, then, excuse me. [*She backs into the door, giggles at her mistake, then makes a hurried exit, calling loudly as she steps off stage, "Yes, Pa," as the voice comes again from below*].

LUTTS. Well, from the state of affairs, it looks as if we should be able to get Ainsworth for a song. [*With this speech he begins musingly to pace across the downstage from L to R. HOFFMAN trips along right on his heels. LUTTS turns down R to pace back across to down L. HOFFMAN is so close on his heels that he has to jump out of the way to avoid a collision*].

HOFFMAN. You're right, Mr. Lutts; if anyone can manage it, you can.

LUTTS. [*still pacing, with HOFFMAN at his heels*] If we can get him for this small part, just to put his name in the cast, it should be a drawing card to some of the older theater-going people. There are many, probably, who remember the name of Cyril Ainsworth.

HOFFMAN. [*sidestepping in front of him to catch his attention*] It surely will aid the box office receipts. It is another of your commendable ideas, Mr. Lutts.

LUTTS. [*continues to pace with HOFFMAN following*] Not a bad scheme, I'll admit. On the other hand, what else is there to do? I'm not so anxious to have him take this part, but we have to find something to draw the people. [*At center he stops short, and HOFFMAN nearly runs into him because he has been following him so closely*]. Of course, what we really need is new talent, new faces, but they are hard to find.

HOFFMAN. If we could find good new talent, we wouldn't have to bother with Ainsworth, is that it?

LUTTS. That's it, although I would like to do something for the old man now that he's down and out. [*Goes to chair down L, which HOFFMAN hurries to dust off. He helps LUTTS to be seated*]. He did me a good turn once, got me in with a producer, and he didn't know me from the dozen other spear-carriers in the cast.

HOFFMAN. [*backs up to straight chair R and sits*] It's hard to imagine the great Lutts ever being a spear-carrier!

SCOTTY. [*entering panting*] I couldn't find Grandfather any-

where. I think he must have gone to the theater to try to get tickets so we can see the play tonight. [*He crosses in back of their chairs to down RC*].

LUTTS. So you're going to see the play tonight?

SCOTTY. Oh, yes. Well, that is, we think we will. [*looking to see if they are comfortable*] Uh, are your chairs all right? One of them is kinda wobbly.

LUTTS. We're quite comfortable, thanks, my boy.

SCOTTY. Would you like some music, maybe?

LUTTS. [*looking around the bare room*] You have a radio?

SCOTTY. Oh, no, we don't, but Mrs. Murphy does, across the way. We can hear it just as good as if it was right in this room. She keeps it going most of the time, so we have music and it doesn't cost us a thing. [*A knock sounds at the door*].

SCOTTY. 'Scuse me. [*He goes to the door. A man's voice, loud and angry, is heard outside*].

SOAMS. I want to see Mr. Ainsworth and I want to see him right now. Ya see these? [*He waves stack of bills in SCOTTY's face*].

SCOTTY. [*partly closing door*] Will you wait just a moment, please? [*He comes back to the men and speaks apologetically, with rather frightened glances at the door*]. Would you mind going into the other room for a little while? I guess I've got a little business to take care of. [*Mrs. Murphy's radio gradually begins to play violent music*].

LUTTS. [*pleasantly*] We can wait in there just as well.

HOFFMAN. Yes, certainly.

SCOTTY. [*leading way to door down R*] In there. I think there's two chairs in there. Are you sure you don't mind? [*HOFFMAN hurries to open the door for LUTTS and stands aside to let him pass*].

LUTTS. [*as he exits into the room*] Don't bother about us, my boy.

SCOTTY. [*going slowly to the door L and opening it*] Won't you come in?

SOAMS. [*barging in belligerently*] Bet your boots I'll come in. And I'm agonna stay right here and not budge till I git some dough fer these bills, ya understand?

SCOTTY. [*thinking fast*] Why, yes, sir, ah, we've been expecting you. [*walks slowly to table, his back to SOAMS*]

SOAMS. Yeah? And I've been suspectin' you. But you ain't

agonna stall no longer. I ain't leavin' here till I gets some cash!
[sits down heavily] I ain't agonna move.

SCOTTY. [speaking as he turns toward SOAMS] Er, ah, won't you sit down? [seeing SOAMS already seated] Oh!

SOAMS. [thunderously] Where's old man Ainsworth?

SCOTTY. Why, he's not here, sir.

SOAMS. Makes no difference. I'll just set here till he comes. I'm gonna collect this bill and not another bite of food are ye gonna git from my store till you've paid fer what you've already et.

SCOTTY. [apprehensively eyeing door where his visitors wait] Well, we really intend to pay you, Mr. Soams, but we —

SOAMS. Yeah? [raises voice] Well, these bills is agonna be paid or I'm gonna have the law on you. That's what I'll do, yessir, I'll have the law put you to work in my grocery — [Idea pleases him] by George, that's what I'll do, that's a good idey. I'll have 'em put you to work fer me, and I reckon as how you'll work these bills out, ever last one of 'em, too.

SCOTTY. [protestingly, frightened] But I can't work in a grocery store, Mr. Soams.

SOAMS. [rising and moving angrily toward SCOTTY, down C, gesturing with the bills] Ya can't, huh? Well, I guess we'll see about that. All this foolishness about practicin' dramy — humph! Chargin' what you eat when you oughta be workin' fer yer board. Ef I get a holt of ya, I'll see that ya work, young man, ye'll work fer me, by George! [laughs loudly] Ha! Ha! Ha!

SCOTTY. [anxiously] Not so loud, please, Mr. Soams —

SOAMS. Don't order me around, you young whippersnapper! When you're workin' fer me, I'll bend yer will, I reckon, yes-sir, I'll bend yer will. [A light comes into SCOTTY's eyes as he recognizes the cue].

SCOTTY. I shall never do it. Never would I yield to one so low, so despicable as you, you groveling, mercenary devil! [He advances menacingly on the groceryman, who is astonished into open-mouthed wonder].

SOAMS. [bewildered] Now, listen here, you can't scare me. Don't start getting smart with me or I'll —

SCOTTY. [seeing the ruse is working, throws himself into his lines with such feeling as would have made even his grandfather marvel] You

are a human monster, crushing and destroying those about you. You are cruel, grasping, sinister, you persecutor, you — [*taking another step toward SOAMS*]

SOAMS. [*retreating*] Now, you can't talk to me like that —

SCOTTY. [*advancing with another step*] Yes, you are a fiend, I say, a fiend! You seek to ruin those about you, you are an ugly monster, you —

SOAMS. [*almost whining*] Now, you stop it, I —

SCOTTY. [*reveling in his tirade*] Get out before you are struck with the enormity, the iniquity of your own greed, you fiend, you monster, you ugly monster, you wolf in sheep's clothing, you — [*He charges toward SOAMS who gets behind chair L. SCOTTY chases him around the chair*].

SOAMS. [*retreating hurriedly to the door*] Wait! Wait, I'll reconsider! Maybe I can let your bills go for another week. Maybe — [*SCOTTY advances menacingly again, and SOAMS ducks out the door, sticking his head back in to speak*]. But I'll get my money sometime or know the reason why! [*He slams the door*].

[*SCOTTY stands for a moment until he is sure the man is gone, then drops his menacing pose and breaks into uproarious laughter. The radio music has faded away*].

LUTTS. [*standing at the door down R*] If the battle is over, may we come out?

SCOTTY. [*turning*] Oh, gee, I'm sorry, I almost forgot all about you. Come on out now.

HOFFMAN. Is the er, ah — fiend gone?

SCOTTY. [*laughing*] Yes, he's gone. Whew! [*wipes brow*] That was a struggle!

LUTTS. [*approaching SCOTTY, upstage C, HOFFMAN behind him*] That was rather a nice little scene you staged just now, boy. Where did you acquire such a vehement vocabulary?

SCOTTY. Oh, those were some lines Grandfather taught me to rehearse with. I just happened to think of them and started off. He must have thought I meant it all. I sure fooled him, didn't I? [*They all laugh; SCOTTY recovers himself and looks about for something with which to entertain the visitors*]. Say, wouldn't you like to see Grandfather's press book? He's got some of the swellest newspaper articles, and all about him, too.

LUTTS. We should like very much to see it.

HOFFMAN. [*obediently echoing MR. LUTTS*] Yes, we should like to see it.

SCOTTY. [*deprecatingly*] 'Course, it may not be very interesting to you because it's all about Grandfather and the shows he was in. You gotta know all about the theater like Grandfather and me before you can appreciate them. You gotta be on the inside, you know. [*He goes to trunk after the book*].

HOFFMAN. On the inside! Dear me, Mr. Lutts is one of the greatest — [*LUTTS turns and silences him with a look*].

SCOTTY. I don't believe there ever was an actor as good as Grandfather. [*brings book from trunk, notices them still standing*] Oh, won't you sit down again? [*LUTTS crosses to chair L. He starts to sit when a loud knock comes again at the door. He pauses almost in mid-air. SCOTTY looks rather nervously at the door, then at the men. He goes to the door L and opens it cautiously*].

WOMAN'S VOICE. [*loud and harsh*] I want to see Mr. Ainsworth and I want to see him immediately!

SCOTTY. Just a minute, please. [*He closes the door and comes back to his visitors. He speaks with some embarrassment*]. I'm afraid I'll have to ask you to go in the other room again. I'm awful sorry.

LUTTS. Oh, it's quite all right. We don't mind. [*He starts across to R for other room. The knock sounds insistently at door L*].

HOFFMAN. No, of course, we don't mind. [*follows LUTTS*]

SCOTTY. Thanks a lot. [*He sees them safely into the other room, then turns as if thinking. Suddenly an idea comes to him. He goes to the door and opens it, then returns quickly to table R. A hard-faced woman marches in determinedly*].

WOMAN. Where's Mr. Ainsworth? [*She stops at C*].

SCOTTY. [*assuming pathetic air*] Mr. Ainsworth is out just now. Could I do anything for you?

WOMAN. [*rudely*] I don't know whether you can or not, but somebody's got to do something, and do it right away! I'm the agent from the collection bureau. I guess you know what that means.

SCOTTY. [*stalling for time*] No-o, not exactly, I —

WOMAN. Well, it means that you two worthless scamps have got out of paying your bills long enough. I'm here to collect and I'm going to collect! Is that plain?

SCOTTY. [*as appealingly as possible*] Why, I'm beginning to understand. Of course, you know we'd like to pay you, [*turns away R*] but things haven't been so good lately, and Grandfather hasn't —

WOMAN. You can stop that right now! I've heard that story too many times and I'm not going to be put off, not this time. I mean business and I don't care to hear your hard-luck tale.

SCOTTY. [*managing to make his lip tremble as Mrs. Murphy's radio sends forth appropriately plaintive music*] Really, I'm not joking. We haven't any money to pay you with. We — [*He sits despondently in chair at back of table*].

WOMAN. Oh, you haven't, eh? Well, you'd better get some and get it quick! It's nothing to me. I was sent here to collect, and collect I will!

SCOTTY. [*turns toward woman*] I do think you might listen to me. Perhaps you could understand how things are and —

WOMAN. [*angrily*] Now, you listen to me. I didn't come here to waste my time arguing with a young fool. I came to collect. Now, do I get my money or am I going to get the police and have you locked up where you belong? That's what I'll do as sure as I'm standing here!

SCOTTY. [*pretending to weep, and using the gestures his grandfather has taught him with this line*] There is no mercy in heaven nor on earth, or how could this tragic thing happen to me? I have done no wrong, why must I suffer? [*chokes and buries his head in his arms on the table*] Why must I suffer?

WOMAN. [*looks uncomfortable, but still unrelenting*] Here, here, now don't you start blubbering.

SCOTTY. [*sobbing audibly*] Life is one black chasm of despair; no hearts soften toward me in my distress; there is no one to whom I can turn in my hour of need. What am I to do? [*He weeps uncontrollably by now, his head in his arms, his shoulders heaving*].

WOMAN. [*awkwardly*] There now, I didn't mean to be rough. Maybe I didn't understand just how bad things were.

SCOTTY. [*Encouraged to new heights, he wails loud and long*]. Oh, what am I to do! There is no mercy! I am only a poor orphan; [*wail*] I have never had parents to guide me; my life has been a bitter struggle from the time I first saw light. [*The woman sniffles audibly; SCOTTY peeps out from his arms at her, then*

sobs afresh]. Oh, where am I to turn in my hour of need? Is there no help? Is there no one who will take pity on a poor orphan? [*He sobs as if his heart were broken. The woman is sobbing heartily by this time*]. There is no mercy in heaven nor on earth, or how could this tragic thing happen to me? I have paid and paid — I can pay no more. [*Here he breaks down and sobs seem to wrack his body, but there is a hint that it might be laughter; the woman is too torn with weeping to notice*].

WOMAN. There, there, child. I didn't intend to be cruel. [*sniffles*] You're breaking my heart! [*She sniffles again; dabs her eyes, and puts her arm around SCOTTY*]. You must forget about these bills. I know how I'd feel if I had a boy of my own [*sniffles*] and he didn't have anyone to help him. [*SCOTTY wails*]. And I don't want it said that I was a hardhearted woman, with no mercy for orphans of the poor. [*tears up bills*] I'll just go along now, and don't you worry about these bills. I'll just charge someone else a little more and take care of these that way. That's what I'll do. You just stop your crying, honey. [*She kisses him, and with handkerchief to her eyes, goes out. SCOTTY waits until she is gone, then looks up from under his arm. There is no trace of tears on his face. He wipes off the kiss disdainfully, then giggles and goes to window*].

SCOTTY. [*leaning out the window*] Thanks for the radio, Mrs. Murphy. That was swell music. It helped me out a lot just now. [*HOFFMAN and LUTTS re-enter*].

LUTTS. [*openly amused*] Might we ask just what sort of scene that last one was?

SCOTTY. [*turning enthusiastically*] Say, wasn't that great? I used a sob scene Grandfather rehearsed on me just today, and did it work! You know, I believe I could put something over like that on a real stage. I thought it was all bunk when Grandfather was teaching me, because I never thought it would work.

LUTTS. [*looking at him closely*] How old are you, my boy?

SCOTTY. [*proudly*] I'm twelve.

LUTTS. Hum. Ever been on the stage?

SCOTTY. No, but Grandfather has, though, and he's swell. He's been teaching me lots, too. He wants me to be an actor some day.

LUTTS. [*nods knowingly to HOFFMAN*] Fresh talent, Hoffman, fresh talent!

HOFFMAN. A real find, I should say, Mr. Lutts. [*Steps are heard on the stairs*].

SCOTTY. [*running to door L*] Oh, there's Grandfather now. [*HOFFMAN and LUTTS move to table R and sit talking in undertones. The old man enters very dejectedly. He sighs as he closes the door slowly. Not noticing the men, he tosses the medal case to SCOTTY*].

AINSWORTH. There, Scotty, now you may have the case for your dead flies.

SCOTTY. [*at his grandfather's L*] Oh, gee, thanks, Grandfather. Why, why, it's empty!

AINSWORTH. Yes, Scotty. [*sighs again; then with an attempt at brightness*] But I have two tickets for the show, Scotty. [*MR. LUTTS clears his throat; SCOTTY suddenly realizes they are still there*].

SCOTTY. Oh, Grandfather, you have some visitors. [*points at men*]

AINSWORTH. [*turns to R quickly; sees them, straightens up, and takes on aristocratic bearing*] I beg your pardon, gentlemen. I did not notice you as I entered. [*takes step to C*] Ah, uh — I am distressed to have to refuse you, but we are in rather sad financial straits at present, and I fear I cannot —

SCOTTY. [*interrupts by tugging at his grandfather's sleeve and whispering loudly*] They're not bill collectors!

LUTTS. [*rising courteously*] I am Mr. Lutts, of the Dramatic Producing Company, and this is Mr. Hoffman. [*HOFFMAN rises*].

AINSWORTH. [*bowing slightly*] I am honored, gentlemen. Will you be seated? [*AINSWORTH is his dignified, poised, commanding self again as he sits in his armchair L, SCOTTY standing behind him. HOFFMAN brings straight chair from table to C for LUTTS, who sits, with HOFFMAN standing behind*].

LUTTS. We have a proposition to discuss with you, Mr. Ainsworth.

AINSWORTH. At your service, gentlemen. I presume you came to see me about a role in your show.

HOFFMAN. Well, yes, and no, Mr. Ainsworth — We —

LUTTS. We have discovered that your grandson has a distinct aptitude for the stage.

AINSWORTH. Oh, I see. [*A look of disappointment spreads over his face when he realizes that they do not want him; but he recovers quickly*].

HOFFMAN. [*echoing LUTTS*] Yes, a remarkable aptitude, Mr. Ainsworth.

SCOTTY. [*with surprise*] Who, me?

AINSWORTH. [*facing the men with quiet dignity*] Yes?

LUTTS. Of course, in the producing end of the business, we are continually seeking new talent, real talent, I should say, and I believe the boy has just that. He promises to become what we have been looking for but almost despaired of finding.

AINSWORTH. There is no doubt in my mind but that Scotty has talent, but he needs training and development.

LUTTS. Quite true. It comes down to this, Cyril. We can offer the boy some excellent roles, juvenile roles right now, and later, as he matures and is trained under our supervision, there should be a fine future open to him.

HOFFMAN. When Mr. Lutts takes an interest in anyone, his future is assured.

AINSWORTH. [*gravely*] I have always predicted a future for Scotty.

LUTTS. I am prepared to offer Scotty a long contract.

AINSWORTH. Yes?

LUTTS. Of course, it will be necessary to have your consent before the contract can be signed. Will you, as his guardian, permit him to enter into a contract with us?

AINSWORTH. [*rises slowly; he goes to rear and looks out of the window, then turns and looks at SCOTTY, who, more or less bewildered by all this, watches his grandfather anxiously*] What do you say, Scotty?

SCOTTY. [*at a loss*] Gee, Grandfather, I don't know. I wanta do what you want me to.

AINSWORTH. For years I've dreamed of you in the theater, my boy. Now the big chance has come. These gentlemen are asking you to enter a contract which will put you on the stage, Scotty.

SCOTTY. Well, whatever you think I should do, Grandfather.

AINSWORTH. [*decidedly, coming down C*] Where is the contract, gentlemen?

LUTTS. [to HOFFMAN] The contract, Hoffman.

HOFFMAN. [eagerly] Yes, of course, right here. [*He takes a paper from his pocket*].

LUTTS. It needs only your signature and that of one witness.

AINSWORTH. A witness? Just a moment. [*He goes to the door L and calls*]. Mrs. Grigsby! Mrs. Grigsby, can you come up for a moment? [MRS. GRIGSBY answers from below, "Sure, I'll be right up, Mr. Ainsworth"].

AINSWORTH. [coming back to men] My landlady, Mrs. Grigsby, will serve as a witness. May I read the contract, please?

HOFFMAN. Certainly. [*He hands him the contract, which AINSWORTH reads. SCOTTY comes and stands wistfully beside him, watching. LUTTS rises, and HOFFMAN removes his chair to L side of table. MRS. GRIGSBY enters, puffing*].

MRS. GRIGSBY. You wuz awantin' me, Mr. Ainsworth? [*She stands uncertainly in doorway*].

AINSWORTH. Ah, Mrs. Grigsby. So sorry to trouble you, but we needed you for a witness to this contract.

MRS. GRIGSBY. Witness? You ain't in trouble, Mr. Ainsworth? [*Hands on hips, she glares at the visitors. HOFFMAN and LUTTS have moved to the table and stand on the R of it, placing the contract on the table*].

AINSWORTH. [smiling] Oh, no, nothing like that. You see, Mrs. Grigsby, these gentlemen are well-known play producers, and they have offered Scotty a long-time contract for stage work. [*He moves to the table, takes the pen HOFFMAN offers him, and signs with a sweeping flourish as MRS. GRIGSBY chatters. Then he steps back to C*].

MRS. GRIGSBY. Scotty? On the stage? You mean — [*recovering from her surprise*] Well, ain't that jest grand? Well, I wuz jest asayin' to myself the other day, I says, "Now, Mr. Ainsworth'll make somethin' outa that boy." I did now, I sez that very thing.

LUTTS. Will you be so good as to sign here, Mrs., er, ah, Rigsby?

MRS. GRIGSBY. [emphatically] The name is Grigsby. [*crosses to table and sits in chair at L of table*] But I guess as how I'll be right proud to put it on that paper, whatever it might be.

LUTTS. Right here. [*He points to place on paper, and MRS. GRIGSBY laboriously signs, chewing her tongue with the effort*].

AINSWORTH. [*as HOFFMAN carefully blots the contract and he walks down L to SCOTTY, who is standing at R of armchair*] Well, it's done, Scotty.

LUTTS. It's all settled, then. And thank you, Mrs. Grisly.

MRS. GRIGSBY. The name is Grigsby!

LUTTS. Oh, of course. Well, shall we go? Do you have any packing to do, Scotty?

SCOTTY. [*startled*] Packing? You mean I gotta go now?

AINSWORTH. Go? You mean — [*recovers quickly*] Yes, of course you must go with them, Scotty.

SCOTTY. But, Grandfather, I —

LUTTS. [*coming to center, HOFFMAN following him*] You realize that we will have complete charge of you, Scotty, and must begin your training immediately. You will spend practically all your time at the theater. This business of becoming an actor is not accomplished in a day.

AINSWORTH. Yes, Scotty, you will be working at the theater now — instead of here — but you will like it, Scotty. [*He tries to smile*].

SCOTTY. Yes, I guess so. [*looks around forlornly*] I guess I don't have anything much to take with me. [*He sees the case still in his hands, fingers it, then hands it to his grandfather*]. I don't suppose I'll need this either, Grandfather. [*AINSWORTH takes the empty case slowly*].

LUTTS. Then we are ready. Come, Scotty. [*HOFFMAN and LUTTS move to door L*].

SCOTTY. [*reluctantly*] Well, good-bye, Grandfather. [*He sticks out his hand awkwardly to his grandfather, his head down*].

AINSWORTH. [*trying to be cheerful, takes his hand, pats it*] Good-bye, my boy — I, I — don't forget your cues, Scotty.

SCOTTY. [*tears in his voice*] I won't, Grandfather, and [*chokes*] don't you forget to — water the geranium.

AINSWORTH. [*lets SCOTTY's hand fall*] I won't forget, my boy.

SCOTTY. [*as he starts to the door, his hand surreptitiously wiping away a tear*] Good-bye, Mrs. Grigsby, and — thanks for the stew.

MRS. GRIGSBY. [*still at the table, wiping her eyes with her apron*] Good-bye, lamb.

LUTTS. [*turns at the door as he and HOFFMAN and SCOTTY exit*] Don't worry about the boy, Ainsworth. He'll be in good hands, you can trust me for that. [*exits. AINSWORTH, apparently not hearing his remark, stares at the door through which SCOTTY has just gone. He sinks slowly into the chair L, and sits as if dazed. MRS. GRIGSBY, still sniffing, watches him anxiously as she sits at table*].

MRS. GRIGSBY. Landsakes, it's almost like one wuz took from the family, [*sniffles*] but it ain't like you had lost him fer good, Mr. Ainsworth. You can allays go to the theayter and see him performin'. And won't that be just grand? [*She sniffs as if she felt it were anything but grand*]. Scotty bein' in plays like you've allays wanted him to be — what you've been wantin' fer years and years, now ain't it? I'm so happy fer you, Mr. Ainsworth. [*She breaks down on "happy" and sobs*]. Why, I sez to myself jest the other day, I sez, "There he is apracticin' Scotty on some of them speeches, and some day Scotty's agoin' to be givin' 'em in a real theayter, that he will." Land, but it don't seem the same round here with him gone. [*She sniffles and dabs her eyes with her apron*]. Goodness, I remember when my sister Carrie's first boy wuz took, land, it wuz —

AINSWORTH. [*rouses himself; he has not heard a word she has been saying*] Mrs. Grigsby, see here, I have two tickets for the play tonight. [*He takes the tickets from his pocket*]. Wouldn't you like to go with me — now that Scotty won't be able to go? We'll have a fine time. [*He is trying very hard to be gay*].

MRS. GRIGSBY. [*touched, rises and goes toward him*] Now ain't that nice of you, Mr. Ainsworth? To think of asking me to go to the theayter, in Scotty's place —

AINSWORTH. You would like the play immensely, Mrs. Grigsby.

MRS. GRIGSBY. That I would, Mr. Ainsworth, I jest know I would, but landsakes, I got my whole week's wash dampened and ready to iron, and I jest can't put it off no longer, Mr. Ainsworth, even as how I would be right pleased to go with you.

AINSWORTH. [*dejectedly pockets the tickets*] That's all right, Mrs. Grigsby; I guess the two tickets just won't be used.

MRS. GRIGSBY. Well, I reckon as how I must be gettin' along.

[*She looks at him anxiously and starts slowly toward door*]. Ain't there nothin' I could bring you, Mr. Ainsworth?

AINSWORTH. [*without looking up*] No, thank you, Mrs. Grigsby, I don't want a thing.

MRS. GRIGSBY. [*reluctant to leave him thus*] Then I suppose I'll be gettin' to my ironin'. Sure you don't want a little hot tea?

AINSWORTH. No, thank you. You're very good, Mrs. Grigsby.

MRS. GRIGSBY. [*moving slowly toward the door until she is behind MR. AINSWORTH'S chair*] Wisht there wuz somethin' I could do, Mr. Ainsworth. I'd like to do somethin' — [*Running steps are heard outside and SCOTTY bursts into the room and rushes over to R of his grandfather*].

SCOTTY. Grandfather, I don't want to leave you. I can't work at the theater without you.

AINSWORTH. [*He looks at SCOTTY hungrily, his face lighting up; then he shakes his head*]. Why, Scotty, child, what are you saying? You must go now. You can't keep those gentlemen waiting. Of course you can work without me.

SCOTTY. [*at his grandfather's knee*] No, I can't, Grandfather, honest. I don't want to go unless you go with me. I need you for a director, Grandfather, to teach me like you always have. You've got to be there to help me, to make me remember my cues. Please, Grandfather.

AINSWORTH. [*sadly*] No, my boy, you will have a fine director, much better than I.

SCOTTY. [*pleadingly*] But I want you, Grandfather. [*eagerly*] We'll have it put in the contract — that you're to be my director. [*AINSWORTH seems to be trying to gather courage to send the boy away again. SCOTTY hurries on eagerly*]. Wouldn't that be swell, Grandfather? You'll do it, won't you? They told me to ask you. [*He points to the door where LUTTS and HOFFMAN are standing, smilingly watching the scene. MRS. GRIGSBY has moved back so that she does not block the two men standing in the doorway*].

AINSWORTH. [*looking around at them*] Is this true, gentlemen?

LUTTS. [*in a tone of respect for the old man*] Yes, Mr. Ainsworth.

AINSWORTH. [*He heaves a sigh of relief, gets up, and takes his hat from the back of the chair, picks up his cane, and takes the theater tickets*

from his pocket. He takes the hand of SCOTTY, who has been watching him eagerly, draws himself up, and smiles]. Then we shall attend the theater, after all! [AINSWORTH and SCOTTY march out, AINSWORTH drawn up with all his dignity, SCOTTY dancing happily beside him, while the men stand by to let the pair pass. MRS. GRIGSBY smiles as she dabs her eyes].

CURTAIN

PART III. LONG PLAYS

Convention Go Hang!

As You Like It

She Stoops to Conquer

Title - ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Author [Signature]

Accession No. 100-100000-100000

Call No. 820.8 ~~220.8~~

[illegible]

Suggestions to Producers

THERE SHOULD BE NOTHING PRETENTIOUS about the setting for *Convention Go Hang!* a farce in three acts. It is the living room of the Blair home, conservatively well decorated.

A simplification can be effected for the cyclorama setting. A hallway at the rear, leading off right to the front door and off left to the stairway, can be used instead of the more elaborate floor plan suggested for the other settings. Of course, the cyclorama may be hung to enclose the whole room, including the stairway. Openings allowed down right and left will be the access to the kitchen and to Grandma's bedroom respectively.

The cardboard setting has a double door in the center rear, a window to the right of that door, an opening up in the left wall, and doors down right and left.

Both the cardboard setting and the more complete setting should be painted with a color which will reflect a great deal of light. A cream-colored background with a bright rust spatter is an attractive combination for these walls. Do not spatter very heavily with the rust. A spatter of brilliant yellow sparingly applied over this cream and rust combination will enliven this surface. The woodwork may be done in an ivory or brown. Ivory is the better of the two for this play because it will make the setting lighter.

LIGHTING

An abundance of light may be used for the play. There is no change throughout. Use light amber or straw color in the border lights and spots. Uncolored light will be best for the floods on either side of the rear entrance. At both of the doors

down right and left there should be strip lights or floods. Light amber or yellow will properly color these lights.

SOUND EFFECTS

The sound of Betty's breaking the dish in Act I can be made by really breaking a dish. Perhaps better, and less expensive, would be a crash effect which is made by filling a small wooden box with fragments of broken glass. Cover the top of the box with screen wire so that none of the contents will spill when the box is dropped to make the sound effect. Place the effect on the right side of the back stage near the kitchen door. Betty can manage this herself, as she will know the cue better than anyone else.

A phonograph will provide radio music. The announcer's voice will seem to come from the radio if a megaphone is concealed behind the tapestry on the railing of the stair landing. The persons reading the parts can stand off stage by the stairway exit and speak into the megaphone. This will make the voice seem to come through the loud speaker of the radio.

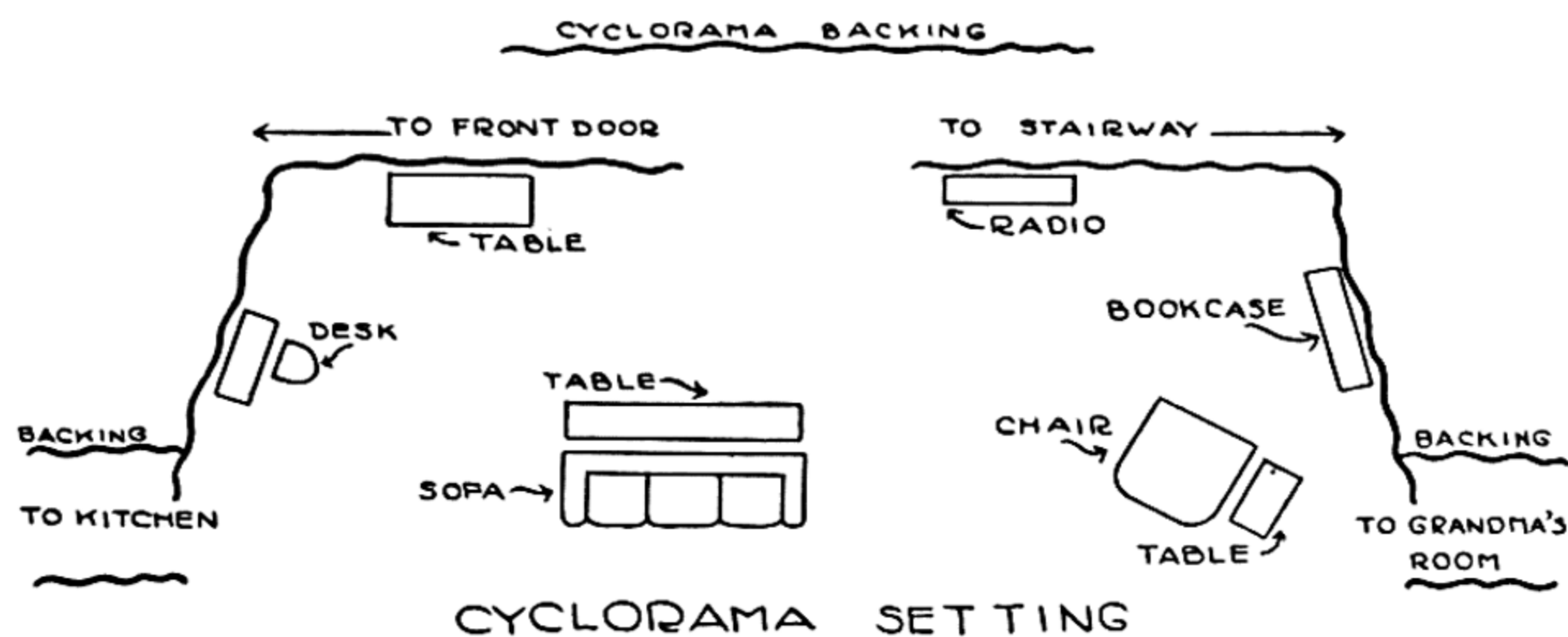
MAKE-UP

Betty. Juvenile foundation grease paint. Rouge and lipstick, not overdone. Accentuate eyes and eyebrows. Light powder over all. Hair should be short and fluffy.

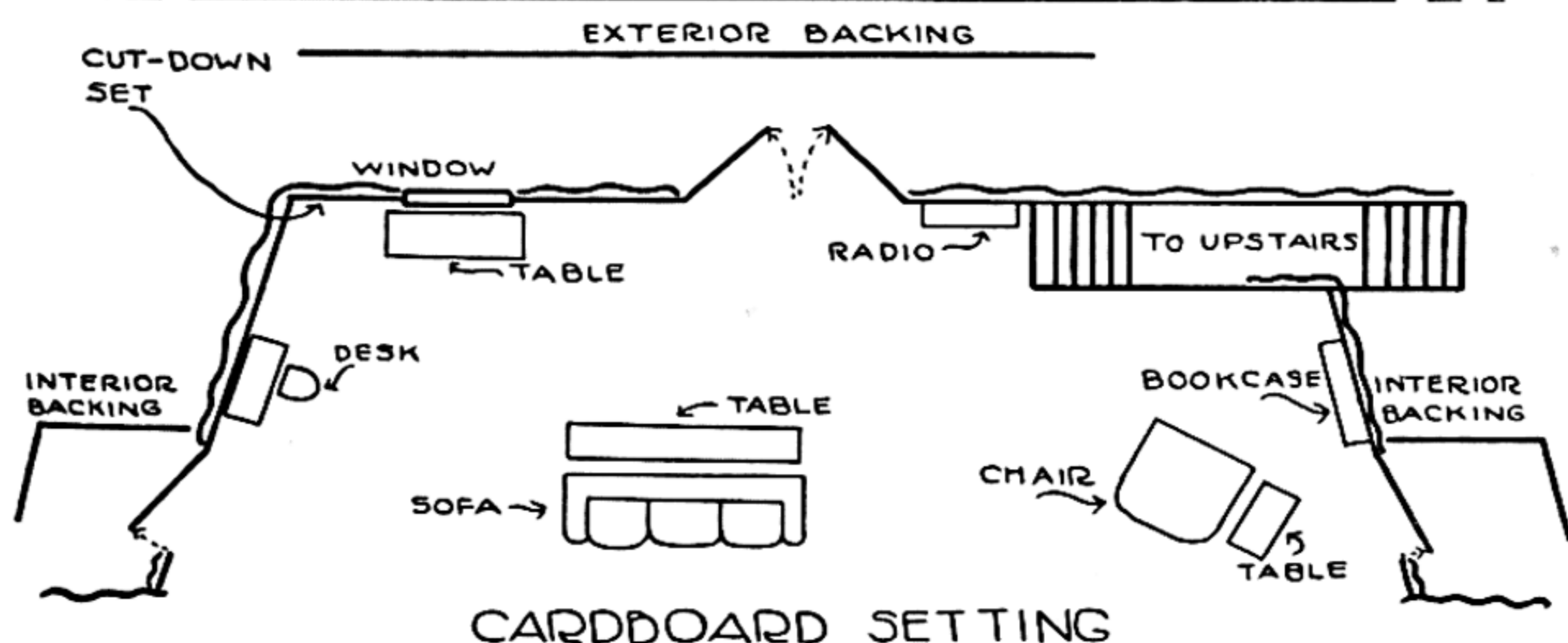
Buddy. Juvenile foundation grease paint. Slight touch of rouge and lipstick. Light powder over all. Hair should give badly combed effect.

Mrs. Blair. Middle-age foundation grease paint on face, neck, and arms. Few wrinkles around eyes and mouth. Slight touch of rouge and lipstick. Powder over all. Hair grayed in streak away from forehead, and grayed slightly at temples.

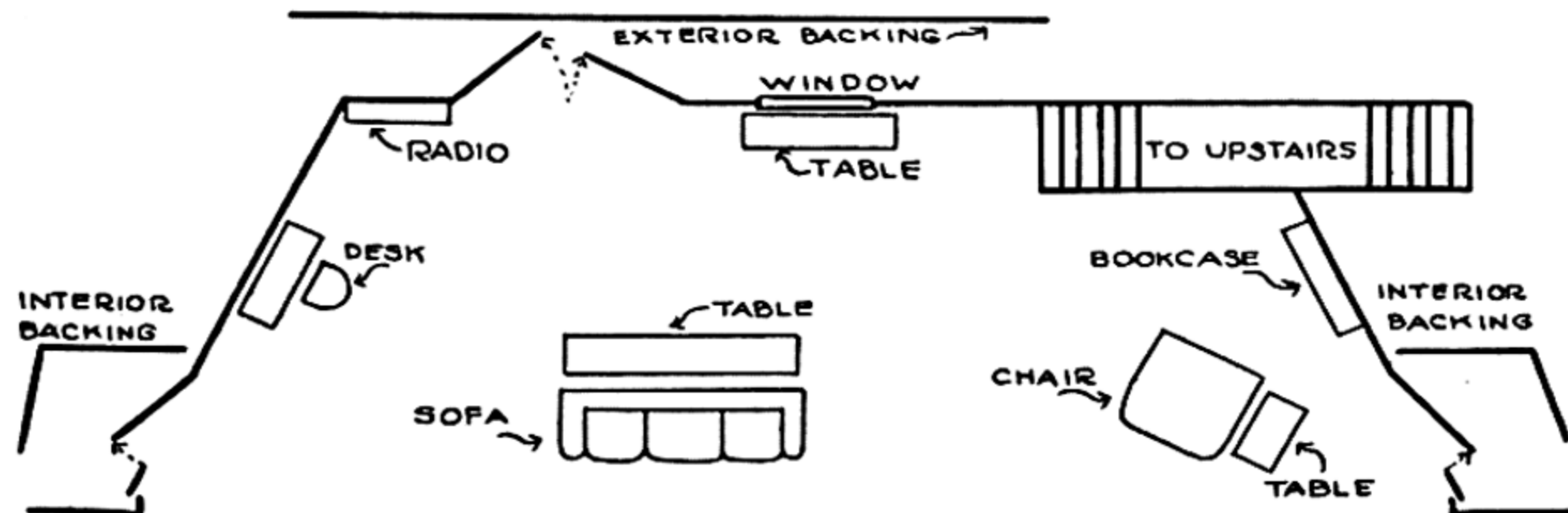
Grandma. Sallow old-age foundation grease paint on face, neck, arms, and hands. Wrinkles on forehead, between eyes, around eyes, nose, and mouth, on chin, and neck. Eyes and brows may be accentuated with black to give bright, twinkling eyes. No rouge or lipstick. Powder over all. Wrinkles and hollows in hands. Hair should be powdered to silvery white.



CYCLORAMA SETTING



CARDBOARD SETTING



COMPLETE FLAT SETTING CONVENTION GO HANG

©

Mr. Blair. Middle-age foundation grease paint. Few wrinkles on forehead and around eyes and mouth. Powder over all. Hair grayed slightly at temples.

Ruth Jenkins. Juvenile foundation grease paint. Rouge and lipstick. Blue shadow on upper eyelids. Eyebrows darkened with black or brown. Eyes may be enlarged by drawing line on upper lid from inner corner of eye to quarter of inch beyond outer corner. Line on edge of lower lid should begin half way from inner corner and extend out to meet line from upper lid. Light powder over all.

Donald Blair. Juvenile foundation grease paint. Slight touch of rouge and lipstick. Eyes may be enlarged same as for Ruth. Light powder over all. Hair well groomed.

Regis Lamont. Same make-up as for Donald.

PROPERTIES

(Throughout Play)

Davenport

Desk or secretary with matching chair

Library table

Small telephone table with telephone

Large overstuffed chair

Footstool

Small end table

Radio

Tapestry over stair railing

Picture in frame to stand on table

Sewing basket with quilt pieces for Grandma

Magazines on tables

Act I

Bouquet of flowers for Ruth

Vase for Betty

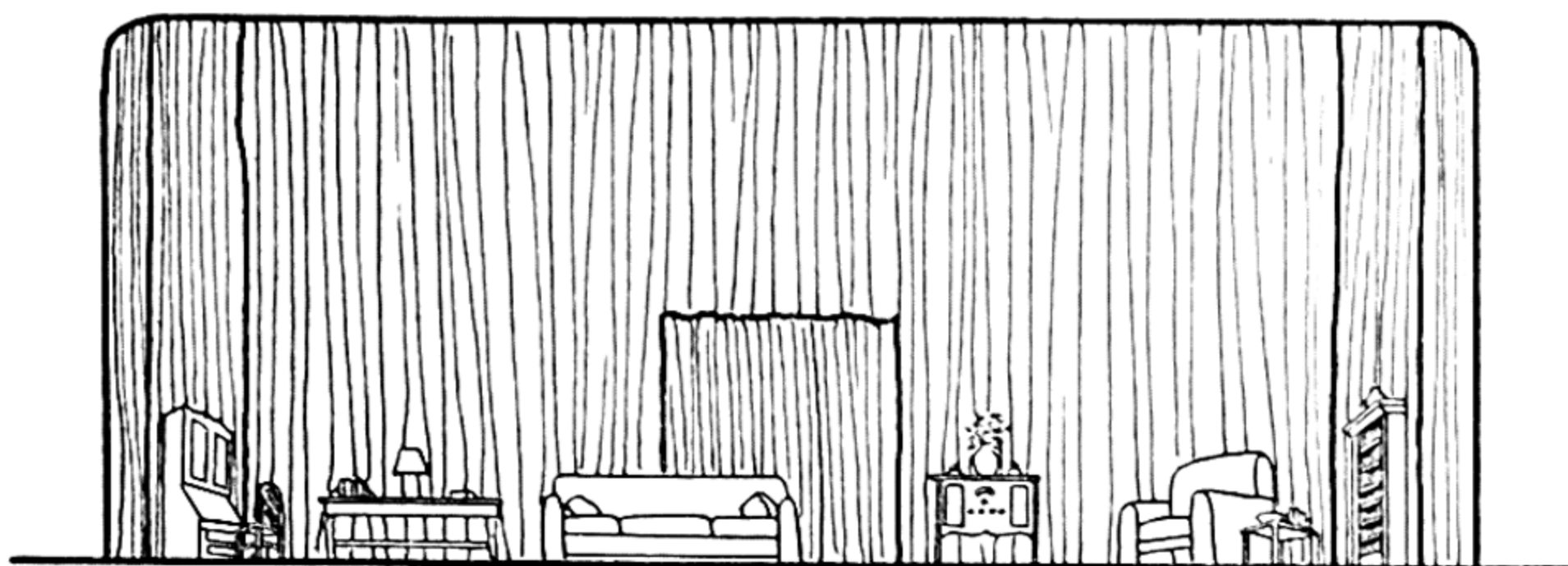
Large old-fashioned apron for Betty

Large pin or badge for Buddy

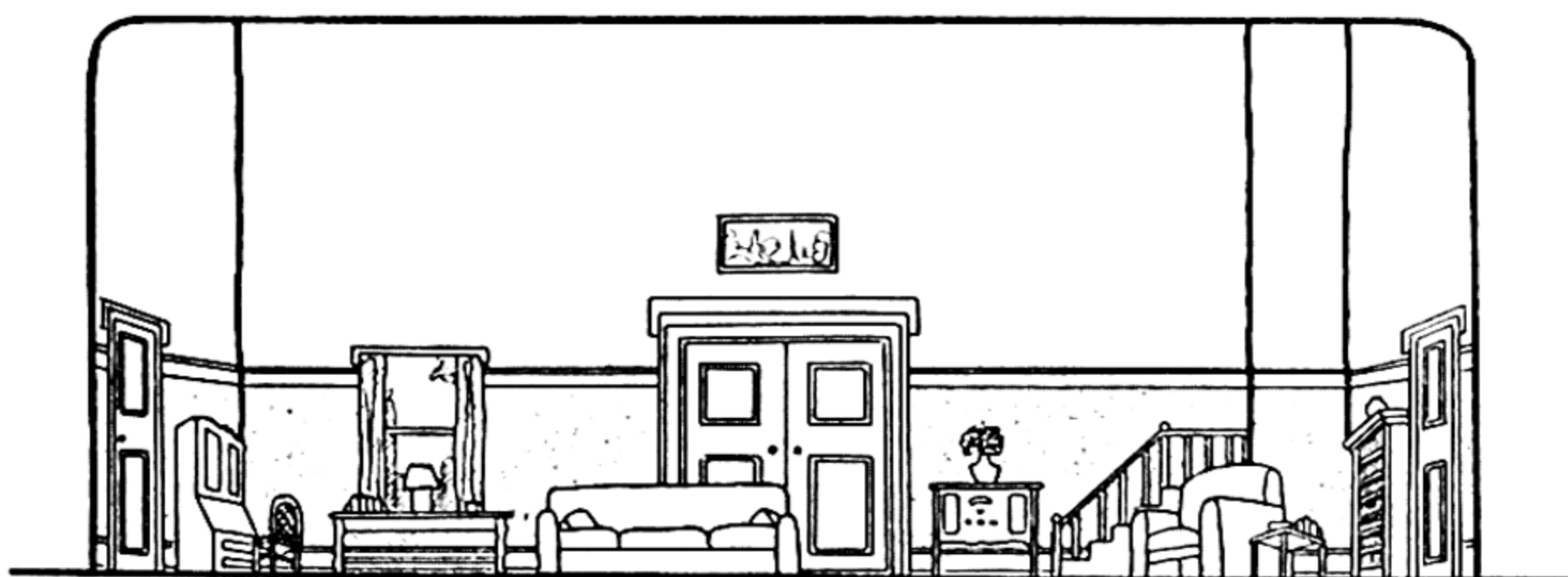
Stock papers for Mr. Blair

Bags or suitcases and golf bags or tennis racket cases for Donald and Regis

Manuscript for Donald



CYCLORAMA SETTING



CARDBOARD SETTING



COMPLETE FLAT SETTING
CONVENTION GO HANG

6

Act II

Manuscript, paper, and pencil for Donald
Magazine for Buddy
Glass of water for Mrs. Blair
Papers, old letters, etc., in desk drawers

Act III

Bottle of milk and newspaper for Mr. Blair
Suitcase for Regis (same as Act I)
Bag for Ruth
Quilt for Grandma
Paper money for Betty
Pieces of broken dishes (*off stage*)
Phonograph or loud speaker, and megaphone to project through
radio (*off stage*)

COSTUMES

Betty. Act I, a bright sport dress or skirt and sweater with matching ankle socks. Low-heeled slippers. Pert, bright little hat or beret. Act II, a colorful little sport dress with socks to match. Act III, same dress as for Act II, but much wrinkled and bedraggled-looking.

Buddy. Unpressed sport trousers, slightly too short, held up by bright suspenders. Loud sweater or athletic shirt. Loud socks, dangling about ankles. Same costume throughout play.

Mrs. Blair. Trim, neat house dress of conservative print or flowered pattern. Serviceable house shoes. Change to same sort of dress for Acts II and III.

Grandma. Long dress of dark, soft color. Little, neat lace collar, high necked. White apron. Gold-rimmed spectacles. Same throughout play.

Mr. Blair. Business suit of dark color, not well pressed. Soft slouch hat, showing much wear.

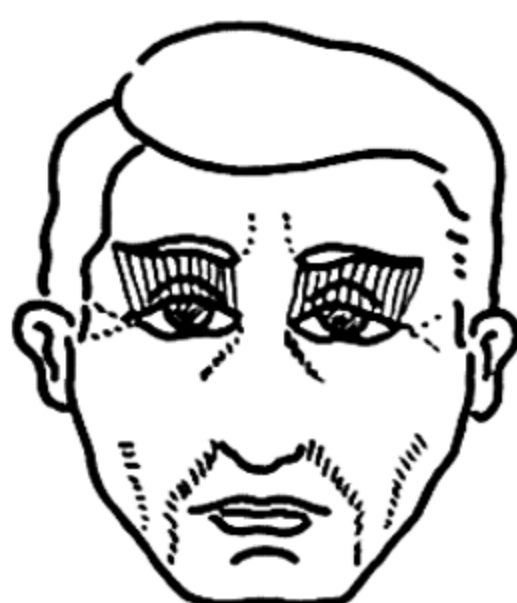
Ruth Jenkins. Light silk sport dress, colorful but tasteful. Light shoes. Perhaps ribbon in hair. Act II, another light silk dress of different color. Act III, smart tailored suit, perhaps fur trimmed, with matching shoes, gloves, and hat.

CONVENTION
GO HANG

BUDDY



BETTY



MR. BLAIR



GRANDMA



MRS. BLAIR

MAKEUP



DONALD BLAIR



RUTH JENKINS



Donald Blair. Well-cut, collegiate suit for Act I. Felt hat. Sport trousers and sweater for Act II. Bright-colored, attractive bathrobe over bright, collegiate pajamas for Act III.

Regis Lamont. Flying suit or riding breeches and coat with leather boots for Act I. Collegiate trousers and sweater for Act II. Well-cut and smartly tailored suit for Act III.

Convention Go Hang!

A Three-Act Farce

CHARACTERS

Betty Blair. A pert-looking, pretty girl, about fourteen. She is vivacious and mischievous, but has a likable personality.

Clarence (Buddy) Jenkins. A gangling, fifteen-year-old boy, at the awkward stage. He is attractive-looking in spite of his awkwardness.

Mrs. Blair. A middle-aged, housewifely woman, with a pretty face in spite of her years, and a determined sort of character beneath.

Grandma Blair. A sweet-looking little white-haired lady, who has a continual twinkle in her eye and an infectious, cackling laugh. In spite of her seventy-two years, Grandma misses nothing going on about her, and has ideas as young as those of her grandchildren.

Mr. Blair. A typical businessman and father, who is at once indulgent and strict, and capable and irresponsible.

Ruth Jenkins. An attractive, almost beautiful girl, with a lovable personality and a keen mind.

Donald Blair. A good-looking college boy type, really very sensible, but inclined to be swayed and worked into enthusiasm by erratic ideas.

Regis Lamont. A dashing type of college boy, blustery, breezy, and gushing, who is unperturbed by almost anything that comes his merry way.

The Blair characters represent the typical middle-class American family. Any small touches — mannerisms, or local color bits — may be added through the ingenuity of the player. Remember, however, that small touches must be exaggerated to carry over the footlights.

SCENES

ACT I. *The comfortable sitting room of the Blair home in midafternoon on a day in June.*

ACT II. *Same as Act I, two days later.*

ACT III. *The next morning.*

The scene is the comfortably furnished living room in the Blair home. A door down right leads to the kitchen. A door down left leads to Grandma's room. Double doors, a little right of center in the rear wall, open onto the front porch. A window, to the left of the front door, looks out onto the porch. A stairway goes up left in the left rear corner of the room. At the foot of the stairs, in front of the window, is a small table on which is a telephone. A radio sits flat against the side of the stairway. A large, comfortable, overstuffed chair with matching footstool is placed down left. Beside the chair is a small end table on which are a few magazines, a sewing basket, and the picture of a boy. A little right of center is a comfortable davenport, facing front, behind which is a library table. In the right rear corner is a desk or secretary with straight chair. A tapestry over the stair railing, a lamp or two, rugs, and pictures give the room a bright, livable atmosphere.

ACT I

BETTY. [*sticks her head in the rear door C and cautiously looks around before entering*] Everything's O.K., Buddy. [*motions off R to BUDDY*] Come on in, but for gosh sakes, don't trip over a chair like you did last night!

BUDDY. [*following her in, looking nervously around*] Gee, I hope your mother doesn't catch me here again. She'll throw me out on my ear. [*BETTY pulls off hat and sits invitingly on the davenport RC. BUDDY looks uneasily around*].

BETTY. [*carelessly*] Aw, she wouldn't either. Anyway, she's probably out ordering groceries so we'll have a swell dinner tonight when Donald gets home.

BUDDY. [*uneasily hopeful*] She doesn't seem to be around anywhere, does she?

BETTY. [*impatiently*] Of course not, silly. It's all right. Come on, sit down.

BUDDY. [*sits warily on the L edge of the davenport. They grin at each other self-consciously*]. Say, Betty, did I show you my new OAK pin? [*unpins badge from sweater*] Looky, O-A-K, Omicron Alpha Kappa, see; I'm a full-fledged OAK now!

BETTY. [*with awe*] You mean you've been emaciated?

BUDDY. [*proudly polishing pin*] Yep. You know the guys down at the high school all call us acorns when we're pledges — but [*with a touch of sophistication*] well, great oaks from little acorns grow, as the Bible says.

BETTY. [*admiring pin*] Gee! Isn't that a honey! Gosh, you're a regular fraternity guy now, aren't you, Buddy?

BUDDY. [*drawing up*] Am I, and how! And sometime I'm gonna put this pin out, let some girl wear it, you know. That's the same as being engaged.

BETTY. Yeah, I know all about that. I was behind the davenport [*points behind her*] the night Donald gave his college fraternity pin to Ruth.

BUDDY. [*immediately interested*] Honest? Did you hear everything?

BETTY. [*nodding wisely*] Uhuh! And saw it too. Oh, boy! Did he ever lay one on her!

BUDDY. [*taken aback*] You mean he — kissed her?

BETTY. [*emphatically*] I'll say he did! [*sighs*] Oh, baby!

BUDDY. [*hesitates a moment*] Say, er, ah, Betty — er, have you ever been kissed — by a man, I mean — well, by a man like me, for instance?

BETTY. Well, no. Not exactly. [*quickly*] But of course I've had plenty of chances.

BUDDY. Oh, sure.

BETTY. [*considering the problem seriously*] I don't think it's right unless you really care for the boy in a big way. You know.

BUDDY. Yeah, I suppose so.

BETTY. [*after a moment's pause*] Buddy — have you, ah, er, have you ever kissed a girl?

BUDDY. Nope. No one except my sister Ruth.

BETTY. [*hopefully*] That's different, isn't it?

BUDDY. Uhuh. But you know, I think I'd like to know how it's really done, wouldn't you?

BETTY. I know the main principles. It's really simple, I guess. You both just do this way. [*She purses lips*].

BUDDY. Aw, I know that much, too.

BETTY. Well, then, you just get together, that's all there is to it. Come on, I'll show you. [*She sits on her legs, facing BUDDY*].

BUDDY. [*hurriedly moving away*] Gosh, Betty, do you think we'd better? We're not — well, we're not really engaged yet, you know.

BETTY. That's right. [*pauses, then has bright idea*] Oh, I know! You just let me hold your new pin while we do it. That'll fix it!

BUDDY. [*glad to have found a justified means*] Sure, that's the idea. [*takes off pin and hands it to her*] Here, now don't drop it.

BETTY. [*a bit disparagingly*] Oh, all right. [*BETTY purses her lips and waits. BUDDY nervously gets into position, looks around uneasily. BETTY opens her eyes*]. Well, what are you waiting for?

BUDDY. [*embarrassed*] Aw, you gotta give me time to get into the spirit of this thing. [*BETTY purses her lips again. BUDDY summons all his courage, leans over and gives her a peck, then turns away embarrassed*].

BETTY. [*disappointedly*] Oh, gee, Buddy. That's not the way. Haven't you ever watched how they kiss in the movies?

BUDDY. [*getting more bold*] Sure! Just hold everything now. That was just a sample. I gotta get warmed up, don't I?

BETTY. I suppose so. [*eagerly*] Well, here goes! [*She gets ready. Suddenly BUDDY grabs her desperately in his arms and kisses her long and violently. MRS. BLAIR appears on the stairway. She gasps in a horrified manner at the scene before her*].

MRS. BLAIR. [*shouting*] Elizabeth Amanda Blair! [*The children jump apart. BUDDY almost falls on the floor from the shock*].

BETTY. [*recovering, rises, backs a little to R, tries to straighten her hair*] Y-yes, Mother? [*BUDDY looks at the floor, nervously twists his hands as he backs around L of davenport toward the door*].

MRS. BLAIR. [*sternly, coming to bottom of stairs*] What in the world does this mean? Clarence Jenkins, what carryings on! I am surprised at you! I shall ask you to leave this house immediately, Clarence, and don't you dare come back until you are able to behave as a decent young gentleman should. I'll settle with Elizabeth later!

BUDDY. [*still backing toward the rear door*] But Mrs. Blair, we were —

MRS. BLAIR. [*silencing him*] No, not a word from you! Now march! [BUDDY *shamefacedly scuttles out the door*].

BETTY. Aw, Mother, we weren't doing anything, honestly. Buddy and I were just trying out, well, we were just —

MRS. BLAIR. [*coming to L of davenport*] No explanations are necessary, Elizabeth. The horrid truth was before my very eyes.

BETTY. But Mother —

MRS. BLAIR. [*interrupting*] What would your brother Donald think if he should come home and find his baby sister having a clandestine engagement? Tsk-tsk-tsk.

GRANDMA BLAIR. [*appearing on landing of stairway*] What's all this yelping about? Betty, have you dragged in another stray pup? [*She comes on down the steps to LC*].

MRS. BLAIR. Yes, she did, but this one had only two legs! [BETTY *looking in her hand, realizes that she still has BUDDY's pin. She doesn't know what to do with it, and starts toward the door as if to catch BUDDY*].

MRS. BLAIR. Elizabeth! [BETTY *wheels around on the threshold*]. Now you get yourself upstairs and put on an apron. You'll have to help with dinner before Donald gets home. [BETTY *exits upstairs, two steps at a time*].

MRS. BLAIR. [*sighing, looking after her*] My goodness, I just don't know what this younger generation is coming to. Frankly, Mother, I'm worried about Elizabeth.

GRANDMA BLAIR. [*complacently, as she begins to unfold an apron, which she prepares to put on*] Now Sylvy, there you go, getting yourself all worked up about that child again. She hain't done nothing wrong, has she?

MRS. BLAIR. [*tying GRANDMA's apron strings*] If she hasn't yet, it won't be long, at the rate she's going. Imagine! I caught her kissing that young Jenkins boy right here in this front room!

GRANDMA BLAIR. [*calmly*] Well, she didn't get hydrophoby, did she?

MRS. BLAIR. [*shocked*] Mother!

GRANDMA BLAIR. Betty's all right. She's just got too much of

this — what is it the young folks call it? — sex appeal! [*cackles*] It runs in the family! [*She starts to kitchen*].

MRS. BLAIR. [*straightening chair down L*] Oh, Mother, you make it so hard for me. How can I do anything with Elizabeth when you sympathize with her loose modern morals?

GRANDMA BLAIR. [*in front of davenport, turns*] Now listen, Sylvy, I kin recall the days when Richard Blair got his walkin' papers from your ma, and jist because he kept you out in the lawn swing one night after dark.

MRS. BLAIR. [*hurriedly*] That has nothing to do with Elizabeth. [*trying to change the subject*] But we'd better get that date pudding made for Donald. My, how he does love your puddings! [*She starts toward kitchen door R*].

GRANDMA BLAIR. Lan' sakes, that's right! [*looks toward radio*] I wished it was time to git the beauty hints program on the radio. It tickles me most to death. Yesterday they wuz tellin' about putting mud on your face and eggs on your hair. [*cackles as she exits into kitchen after MRS. BLAIR*] RICHARD BLAIR enters. He closes the screen door softly, looks around, throws his hat on the davenport, and takes some papers from his pocket. He pats them affectionately, looking around to see if anyone is in sight. He thumbs through the papers eagerly, then looks for some place to put them. MRS. BLAIR opens the kitchen door R and RICHARD quickly puts the papers behind him].

MRS. BLAIR. [*calling*] Elizabeth! Eliza— [*sees MR. BLAIR*] Why, Richard, what are you doing home at this hour? [*She comes in to RC*].

MR. BLAIR. [*nervously*] Oh, hello, dear. [*He crosses to RC and kisses her, still holding papers behind him*]. I er, ah, just decided to come home and have a good afternoon of rest before Donald gets home. What time is he due?

MRS. BLAIR. You remember he said in his letter that he'd be here on the five o'clock train. [*noticing his discomfiture*] What makes you so fidgety? You act like — Richard! There's something in your hand that you don't want me to see. What are you holding behind you?

MR. BLAIR. [*awkwardly*] It's nothing, dear, merely some papers. [*trying to be casual*] Where's Grandma?

MRS. BLAIR. Richard Blair! I have my suspicions of you. What have you got there?

MR. BLAIR. [*innocently*] Where?

MRS. BLAIR. Behind you!

MR. BLAIR. Nothing important, really, only some —

MRS. BLAIR. [*sternly*] Hold out your hands, Richard! [*He holds out one hand, puts it behind him again, then holds out other hand*].

MRS. BLAIR. Richard! Both hands!

MR. BLAIR. [*reluctantly*] I wanted to surprise you. [*He slowly draws papers from behind his back*].

MRS. BLAIR. [*in exasperation*] Up to your old tricks again! That gilt edge gives you away. What is it this time? Some more of that worthless oil stock?

MR. BLAIR. [*holds out stock, with a note of pained pride*] Now, Sylvia, I couldn't help that. But this is a sure-fire deal! It's airplane stock, Sylvia, bound to go up! [*He laughs nervously at his own joke*].

MRS. BLAIR. [*refusing to see the joke*] Airplane stock?

MR. BLAIR. [*enthusiastically*] Yep. And it's great stuff! Why, we'll be positively wealthy within a month; we'll have —

MRS. BLAIR. [*wearily*] Wait! [*sighs*] I've heard all that before. [*She crosses R to davenport*].

MR. BLAIR. [*eagerly following her*] Now, Mother, let me explain. This stock is different! It can't fail. You see, I got it on an inside tip from Lew James, and Lew says that it —

MRS. BLAIR. [*interrupting*] Yes, and who was it who sold you that gold brick oil stock, Richard?

MR. BLAIR. Well, [*pauses*] well, Lew sold me that too, but —

MRS. BLAIR. [*angrily, crossing to L*] I knew it! Lew James is an old skinflint and a swindler besides! Why, he cheated you out of \$500 that last time!

MR. BLAIR. [*following her*] Now, Mother, Lew's all right. Why, that oil stock business was the only time he ever went wrong on a market deal.

MRS. BLAIR. [*her back to him*] I haven't a bit of use for that old Shylock. Why, he'd —

MR. BLAIR. [*defensively*] Lew's a dependable businessman. Now about this airplane stock — Sylvia, Lew says it can't fail to make us a cool million!

MRS. BLAIR. [*turning suddenly*] Richard, how much money did you invest in that stock?

MR. BLAIR. [*hesitantly*] Now, I'll tell you, Mother. It was this way. Airplane stock is the best thing on the market right now. Lew says you can't make a mistake on it. Why, he told me about a man who bought —

MRS. BLAIR. [*sternly*] Answer my question, Richard! How much did you pay for that stock?

MR. BLAIR. [*after a pause*] There's \$3000 worth right here, 500 shares at \$6 each and [*quickly*] I was darn lucky to get Lew to let me in on the ground floor!

MRS. BLAIR. [*gasping*] Richard Blair! Do you mean to tell me that you invested all our savings, every cent we had in the world, in airplane stock? Oh, Richard! [*She drops into chair down L, wailing, and covers her face with her hands*].

MR. BLAIR. Now, Sylvia, it's perfectly all right. We can't lose anything on it, and just think of the fortune we'll make when this stock goes up.

MRS. BLAIR. [*still in tears*] But Richard, that was the money we'd put by for the children, you know that, and now we haven't — [*She weeps afresh*].

MR. BLAIR. [*lays stock on table at L of chair and hastens to pat her shoulder*] There, there, honey. Don't you worry about that at all. Why, isn't Donald all graduated from the university? He'll be making his own money from now on.

MRS. BLAIR. [*sadly*] Yes, but there's Betty coming on. You know we'd planned to send her to college, too.

MR. BLAIR. [*brightening*] Of course, but by the time Betty's ready for college, this stock will be worth thousands of dollars, maybe millions; you can't tell about this airplane stock.

MRS. BLAIR. No, you never can tell. That's what worries me, Richard. [*looks fondly at picture of DONALD on the table beside her*] And there's Ruthie and Donald to consider. You know I've always wanted those children to have a nice wedding.

MR. BLAIR. [*suddenly remembering*] That's right! Donald and Ruthie's wedding. [*musingly crosses to C*] Donald will be wanting to settle down now that he's out of college.

MRS. BLAIR. [*still gazing at picture*] Ruthie will make Donald a nice little wife, Richard. She's such a sweet little homebody.

MR. BLAIR. [*at L end of davenport*] Yes sir, Ruthie's a fine girl.

MRS. BLAIR. [*smiling at picture*] My goodness, it just doesn't seem possible that those two are old enough to get married!

MR. BLAIR. [*turning excitedly*] You know, Sylvia, when this stock makes good, we'll be able to give those kids something grand in the way of a wedding present.

MRS. BLAIR. [*pays no attention to him, takes up picture*] My, my, I can't realize that it wasn't only yesterday that Donald was sending Ruthie lace valentines and gumdrops! Donald — my first baby — old enough to get married!

MR. BLAIR. [*coming to look over her shoulder at picture*] You know, Mother, we oughta be right proud of our son. He's made a fine record at college.

MRS. BLAIR. [*proudly*] I always said Donald had superior intelligence.

MR. BLAIR. [*pensively*] I hope the boy's got enough gumption to stay clear of all these highfalutin ideas that's runnin' wild in colleges nowadays. I couldn't tell much what he thought the last time he was home.

MRS. BLAIR. No, Donald is such a sensible [*starts to set picture back on table, sees stock lying there*] — Now Richard Blair! Haven't I cautioned you about laying your valuable papers around? What are you going to do with it?

MR. BLAIR. [*hurrying over to pick up stock*] Well, I kinda planned on stoppin' at the bank with it, but you know you just can't depend on the banks nowadays, Mother, what with all these robberies.

MRS. BLAIR. [*rising*] But Richard, we can't leave it around here. My goodness, someone could walk in and steal it! Oh, my, Richard, since you had to go and buy it, I do wish you had had sense enough to put it in the office vault.

MR. BLAIR. Now don't fret about it, Sylvia. I wanted to have it around handy anyway, because Lew says it's likely to go up any minute.

MRS. BLAIR. [*crossing to davenport*] It probably never will amount to anything, but it won't hurt to take care of it.

MR. BLAIR. You just wait and see, Sylvia. I want to have it right here where I can grab it quick when it comes time to sell. [*crosses to her*] See, I even got it all signed and ready!

MRS. BLAIR. Well, I suppose you'll have to put it in the desk, but that's not a good place for important papers, Richard.

MR. BLAIR. [*goes to desk in R corner*] It will be safe all right in here, Sylvia. [*opens drawer*] We'll stick it down in this bottom drawer and no one could ever find it. [*BETTY has appeared on the stairway and stands watching her father curiously*].

MRS. BLAIR. But it does frighten me so to have so much money lying around in the house.

MR. BLAIR. There now, that's as safe as any bank vault and no one —

MRS. BLAIR. [*turning R interrupts him as she sees BETTY*] Sh-sh! [*then*] Elizabeth, now you get into the kitchen and help your grandmother.

BETTY. [*skipping across the room and throwing her arms around MR. BLAIR*] Hello, Dad, old dear! How's everything? Sorta celebrating by taking a vacation from the old newsy woozy paper, aren't you?

MR. BLAIR. [*sternly*] Mind your mother, Betty.

BETTY. [*kissing him fondly on the cheek*] Good old Dad! [*exits into kitchen*].

MRS. BLAIR. That child has no respect whatever for her elders!

MR. BLAIR. [*looking after BETTY, smiling*] She'll be a corker some day! [*suddenly*] But I must call the office and see if any news has broken since I left. [*crosses to telephone table at foot of stairs*] We're going to run a three-column story on that assault over at Rexville.

MRS. BLAIR. [*moving to desk and straightening things on it*] Goodness, Richard, you're supposed to be taking the afternoon off. Can't you forget that newspaper office for a couple of hours?

MR. BLAIR. [*dialing number*] But this is a big scoop, Sylvia, one of the best news stories of the year. This fellow beats up his wife because she got modern ideas in her head. She says a wife don't have to do what her husband says in these days. Sensational stuff! [*MRS. BLAIR sighs and shakes her head*]. Hello, hello, lemme talk to Marshall. Marshall? This is Blair. Say, did you send a reporter over to get some pictures of that assault case? What? He didn't get any? Say, listen, you tell him I want a picture of the husband, and one of the wife all

bruised up, see, for tomorrow's paper. Understand, I want those pictures! And listen, better run a streamer on that story, play up the wife freedom idea, you know, big stuff. And make that church dedication second page matter. O.K. If anything breaks, call me here at home. Awright. Good-bye.

MRS. BLAIR. Such sordid things as the papers print nowadays! Gracious, it's getting so I can't let Elizabeth read her father's own paper.

VOICE. [*calling from outside*] Mrs. Blair! Mrs. Blair!

MRS. BLAIR. [*moves back to front door*] Oh, there's Ruthie!

RUTH. [*enters, carrying bouquet of flowers*] Hello! Just dropped over to bring you some flowers. Aren't they lovely?

MR. BLAIR. [*moving down L from telephone table*] How are you today, Ruthie?

RUTH. Oh, I'm fine, as usual, thanks.

MRS. BLAIR. [*walking with RUTH from door to table back of davenport*] My, but these are pretty. I'll get a vase. Elizabeth!

BETTY. [*from kitchen*] Whaddya want?

MRS. BLAIR. Bring that vase from the kitchen table, dear.

BETTY. Oh, awright!

MRS. BLAIR. [*to RUTH*] Elizabeth is washing all the new china; we're going to surprise Donald with it. We — [*A crash and bang of breaking dishes is heard from the kitchen*].

MRS. BLAIR. [*holding up her hands, moves toward kitchen door R*] Merciful heavens, that child has broken another of my new dishes!

BETTY. [*comes through kitchen door R, vase in hand. She wears a long apron which almost trips her*]. Only broke two plates, Mom, but it won't hurt; we still got enough to go round.

RUTH. Hello, Betty.

BETTY. Hi, Ruth. You the one that wanted this posy holder?

RUTH. [*nods assent to BETTY, then to MRS. BLAIR*] Donald is so fond of tulips, you know. I couldn't resist bringing them over.

MRS. BLAIR. [*taking vase from BETTY, comes back to table with it*] Yes, he does like them. It was so thoughtful of you to remember it. He'll be very pleased.

MR. BLAIR. Will you be glad to have Donald home again, Ruth?

RUTH. [*helping MRS. BLAIR arrange flowers*] Oh, yes! Of course, I can hardly wait to see him, I mean — [*She pauses, embarrassed*].

MR. BLAIR. [*coming over and patting her shoulder with fatherly air*] Now, you don't need to be backward around us. You know well enough how we feel about you and Donald. [*turns and walks LC*] Yessiree, nothing would please us better than to see you and Donald —

GRANDMA. [*entering from kitchen, sputtering*] Great Scott! These modern gas stoves is likely to blow your head off most anytime. Can't trust the darn things a minute — [*sees RUTH*] Oh, hello there, child.

RUTH. Hello, grandma dear. How are you today?

GRANDMA. [*crossing down L*] Lousy! If you really wanta know.

MRS. BLAIR. Such slang as you and Betty use!

GRANDMA BLAIR. [*seating herself in armchair L*] Oh, well, pure and noble speech don't get it said near as quick!

MRS. BLAIR. Mother, will you show Ruthie that new design you're making on that quilt for her hope chest?

MR. BLAIR. [*sitting on L end of davenport*] Gonna make one for her bed, too, Grandma? [*He laughs at his own joke*].

GRANDMA. Now you jist lemme alone about that quilt. Sylvy jist keeps after me, rushin' me to death fer fear I ain't gonna get it quilted afore you and Donald is married. Lan' sakes, you ain't gonna need it right off, not on these hot nights anyhow.

RUTH. [*embarrassed, crosses around R end of davenport*] Of course not. I mean, well, there's plenty of time before we, Donald and I, well, before any wedding comes off.

GRANDMA. Bet yer life. In these days you can't never tell what's gonna put a jinx in weddin' arrangements. There's many a slip 'twixt the horse and the halter. No man's a cinch till he's safe past the altar. [*She cackles*].

BETTY. [*at desk, up R*] When you gonna start a hope box for me, Mom?

MRS. BLAIR. Elizabeth, you hike yourself back into the kitchen and finish those dishes. [*BETTY starts slowly toward the kitchen, then turns to see if her mother is looking and sneaks back into the living room*].

MR. BLAIR. [*rising*] Guess I'd better call the office and see if they're going to get to press on time. [*moves up L to telephone table*] Anxious to see how that front page make-up is gonna look.

MRS. BLAIR. Richard, you settle down and stop worrying about that newspaper, and Richard! Pick up your hat! Haven't I told you not to leave your clothes cluttering up the living room? [MR. BLAIR *stops in his path, returns to davenport, obediently picks up hat, and takes it upstairs*].

GRANDMA. Men are jist naturally that way, Sylvy. Richard's father was allus leaving his artics on my best carpet.

BUDDY. [*sticks his head in the door, sees BETTY but does not see MRS. BLAIR; in stage whisper to BETTY*] Hey, is the old lady around?

RUTH. [*turning*] Buddy Jenkins, what are you doing over here?

BETTY. Hi, Buddy. Come on in.

BUDDY. [*sees MRS. BLAIR, who on seeing him comes over R and marches BETTY to the L side of the room away from BUDDY*] Naw, can't stay. Just come over to get my Sis. Ruth, you gotta come home and press my pants. I forgot to hang 'em up last night when I took 'em off.

RUTH. [*to MRS. BLAIR*] Buddy is such a problem! Sometimes he nearly drives us crazy!

MRS. BLAIR. How well I know it. I remember when Donald was his age!

RUTH. I know Buddy must be a terrible nuisance to you, running over here all the time.

MRS. BLAIR. [*glares at BUDDY, then says sweetly to RUTH*] Oh, not at all. We're glad to have the child around. [BUDDY and BETTY *look at each other. GRANDMA cackles*].

MR. BLAIR. [*coming downstairs, crosses, and sits on L end of davenport*] What's wrong, Grandma?

GRANDMA. [*recovering hurriedly*] Not a thing. Jist happened to think of something that tickled me.

RUTH. I must go; I know you're busy getting dinner for Donald, and I mustn't bother you any longer. [BETTY, *up L, is signaling to BUDDY, who still stands in doorway. BETTY holds up his pin, waving it to indicate she will give it back to him*].

MRS. BLAIR. Well, do come back, Ruth. You know you're just like one of the family and — [*sees BETTY whose hands are in mid-air, signaling to BUDDY*] Elizabeth! What are you doing?

BETTY. [*stops with her hand in the air, in innocent surprise*] Who, me? Why, nothing. Er, ah, just, why, it's that moth again, Mother. [*She grabs at air*].

MRS. BLAIR. [*concerned*] Oh, my, I hope it doesn't get into the curtains. [*starts looking around for moth*] They just eat them up in no time. [*Everyone starts looking for moth. BETTY ends up with BUDDY, up R by the desk*].

BETTY. [*calmly*] Hum, it's gone now.

RUTH. [*crosses to door, rear RC*] Come along, Buddy, we must go home right this minute. [*She starts out the front door and bumps into a figure laden with luggage, golf bag, etc.*].

RUTH. [*stepping back into the room, cries joyously*] Donald! [*The family all cry "Donald!" and rush to the door to greet him. RUTH and BUDDY step down right. DONALD steps into the room, puts down his luggage*].

MRS. BLAIR. [*kissing him*] Donald, dear! You're home early; we didn't expect you for another two hours!

DONALD. [*with decidedly collegiate, cultured accent*] By jove, it's really splendid to see you all again.

MR. BLAIR. [*shaking his hand heartily*] How are you, son? Glad to have you home! [*DONALD, MR. BLAIR, and MRS. BLAIR come down to L end of davenport*].

GRANDMA. Come over here and kiss your grandmother, Donald. [*DONALD walks over to her chair and kisses her, then BETTY rushes upon him*].

BETTY. Hello, old sock, prepare for the struggle! [*She throws her arms around him and kisses him loudly*].

DONALD. [*disengaging himself*] Really, Elizabeth, aren't you rawther tempestuous?

BETTY. [*blankly*] Am I what?

DONALD. [*crosses C to RUTH who has come to R end of davenport*] Hello, Ruth. I'm glad to see you again.

RUTH. [*fervently*] And I'm glad to see you, Donald.

DONALD. [*turning to BUDDY who has come up to table behind davenport*] And how are you, Clarence?

BUDDY. [*halfway holds out his hand, looks admiringly at DONALD*]

Oh, I'm all right. [*He is abashed when DONALD sits on R end of davenport, disregarding his outstretched hand*].

MRS. BLAIR. [*crossing over to DONALD*] But Donald, how did it happen that you got here so soon? Was the train early?

DONALD. Oh, no. The trains are too stupid. I had such a delightful visit with Regis and his family that I invited him to come home with me. So we flew down in his plane.

MRS. BLAIR. [*sitting beside DONALD*] You came in an airplane? Oh, Donald, I would have been worried sick if I had known that.

MR. BLAIR. [*crossing over and immediately showing interest*] In an airplane? Fine idea, my boy, fine idea. Airplanes are soon going to be the only method of travel. Now, take airplane stock for instance —

MRS. BLAIR. [*giving him reproving look*] Richard! [*MR. BLAIR looks crestfallen and sits on L arm of davenport*].

MRS. BLAIR. Donald, where is Regis — I mean Mr. Lamont?

DONALD. I left him trying to find a barn or some sort of building to use as a hangar for the plane. He'll be along shortly.

MRS. BLAIR. [*rising*] Oh, my goodness, I'll finish dinner right away and set an extra place. I suppose you'll both be starved. We'll have a nice long talk later. [*moves toward kitchen door R*] Come along, Mother.

GRANDMA. [*rising and crossing R*] Sometime when your friend's not busy, Donald, I think I'd like to go up for a tail spin or two. [*She exits into kitchen*].

DONALD. [*rises laughing, calls after her*] Perhaps I can arrange it, Grandmother. [*BETTY slips out with BUDDY, unnoticed*].

MRS. BLAIR. [*turning as she goes into the kitchen*] Richard, you go upstairs and make yourself presentable. [*DONALD moves down L, looking about the room rather distastefully*].

MR. BLAIR. [*complacently sitting on the davenport, makes no effort to move*] Oh, I'm all right. I gotta call the office after a while, and then I wanta talk this airplane stock business over with Donald.

MRS. BLAIR. [*giving him a withering look*] Richard! Do as I said! Don't you see Donald and Ruthie want to be left alone? They probably have lots to say to each other.

MR. BLAIR. [*flustered, rises*] Oh, sure, yes, yes, of course. I

guess I'd better go up and [*fumbles for an excuse*] guess I'd better change my, er, change my tie! [*He exits upstairs*].

DONALD and RUTH laugh in embarrassment. DONALD stands LC, RUTH up R.

MRS. BLAIR. [*as she goes into the kitchen*] Elizabeth! Elizabeth! Now, where did that child run off to? [DONALD and RUTH are plainly embarrassed. RUTH rushes over to DONALD as soon as they are alone expecting to be kissed].

DONALD. Er, ah, have you been well, Ruth?

RUTH. [*still ready to be kissed*] Yes, quite well, thank you. And you?

DONALD. [*turning away down L*] Splendid, thanks. I've been very busy.

RUTH. [*hurt, turns away*] Oh — yes, I presumed so from the scarcity of your letters.

DONALD. Naturally, I've been deucedly rushed.

RUTH. I suppose you're glad to be home.

DONALD. Of course, in a way. But this stupid town offers no attraction for me any more, that is, outside of the family, er, and, of course, a few friends.

RUTH. [*at table back of davenport fingering flowers*] Yes, I imagined it would be dull for you here.

DONALD. Dull! The place would bore me beyond expression within a few weeks.

RUTH. [*takes a step toward him down L*] Then you're not planning to stay here and settle down as your folks had counted on your doing?

DONALD. Heaven forbid! I should go mad here. When I think of all those poor devils who marry and "settle down" to make a home here, struggling along on \$30 a week! It's unbearable!

RUTH. [*turning away to hide her disappointment, comes and sits on R end of davenport*] But, Donald, most of them are happy.

DONALD. Happy? Tied down with a wife? Their individuality destroyed — their personality crushed — their whole existence —

RUTH. But love changes that —

DONALD. Love! What is love? Love is a habit — a false illusion wrapped up in conventional sentimental cellophane!

RUTH. [*astonished at his vehemence*] Why, Donald, what do you mean?

DONALD. [*coming over and sitting on L arm of davenport*] Ruth, the truth of the matter is — [*He sighs with relief because this is what he has wanted to tell her*]. Well, I may as well explain my views to you right now before things go any further. The fact is, I've changed a great deal since I last saw you.

RUTH. I realized that. Your letters got fewer and farther apart.

DONALD. You know, college does a lot for a man. It broadens his whole life, it brings out his subdued nature, gives him an opportunity to develop his personality, shows him the true light on things, and opens his mind to progressive ideas.

RUTH. [*a bit exasperated and astounded*] Yes, I understand all that, Donald, but I don't see what you're driving at.

DONALD. It all narrows down to this, Ruth. Now, modern psychology — [*He draws closer to her, getting very businesslike*].

RUTH. [*interrupting*] But what has all this to do with, er, well, with love and marriage? That's what we were talking about.

DONALD. It has everything to do with it. Love and marriage! That's for the prosaic, ordinary people who haven't the inspiration and ambition to put love and marriage aside and devote their lives to emancipating the world.

RUTH. Emancipating the world?

DONALD. Yes! Ruth, I'm convinced that the present mode of living is all wrong! We're so bound by convention that our souls are reduced to a state of servitude, sacrifice, and unhappiness. Our souls are mere puppets, jumping on the strings of set rules of order. [*He rises, walking down L, gesturing dramatically as if he were delivering a lecture*].

RUTH. Maybe so, but what of it?

DONALD. What of it? [*He walks back toward her, pounding his fist in his hand*]. We've got to free our souls, yessir — that's the answer, Soul Freedom!

RUTH. Maybe people don't want their souls freed.

DONALD. That's it! They think they don't. But that's because no one has showed them how bound they are by little petty conventions. [*jumping at her*] Why do you wear those clothes?

RUTH. [*startled, draws back*] Why, I don't know — because, well, why does everyone wear clothes?

DONALD. [*triumphantly*] There you are! Why does everyone wear clothes! For no reason at all. It's just a silly convention with no foundation.

RUTH. [*timidly*] You're not — you're not thinking of going nudist, too?

DONALD. [*loftily*] Of course not! It's more comfortable and attractive-looking to be covered some way, but why follow a set pattern of dresses for women, or shirts and trousers for men? Just silly habits which our souls are too blind to see!

RUTH. I don't see what you mean, Donald.

DONALD. [*sitting beside her*] I mean that all conventions, no matter what, are contrary to the normal laws of human nature. Our souls were meant to be free. We should live and act as we feel, not as others tell us we should, or as others around us are living and acting. Why do we eat with knives and forks and spoons? Why do we say "How do you do" and "Good-bye"? Because it's the conventional thing to do.

RUTH. But such conventions make life easier and happier.

DONALD. Bosh! Our souls were not meant to be made to shake hands, wear three-button coats, learn to dance, or sleep in pajamas!

RUTH. But those are such minor things, why get so excited about them?

DONALD. Because if you put them all together, you have a mass of silly conventions, customary habits which wring our souls and suppress our individualities.

RUTH. What are you going to do about it?

DONALD. That's what I'm trying to tell you. [*rises, walks down L*] It's going to be my life's work to change all this. I'm going to show the millions of convention-bound people in the world that there can be nothing real or natural until all souls are set free, until the shams of convention are banished. My theory of soul freedom will revolutionize the social status of the entire world.

RUTH. So you're going to work in the foreign countries, too.

DONALD. [*in injured tone*] This is not a joking matter, Ruth. [*eloquent again*] When I think of all the people steeped in con-

ventions, customs, and traditions, so tied by habit that their souls are smothered, I know that I must be their emancipator, show them how they can throw off the ball and chain of convention. It's up to youth to free the souls — we who have not as yet been completely buried with trite customs and beliefs — we can show others how to live again.

RUTH. [*almost in tears*] Surely you don't believe all that?

DONALD. Believe it? I know it's true. In fact, I've started a book on Freedom of the Soul — [*goes to suitcase and takes out manuscript*] see, here's the manuscript. I'm going to call it "Let Soul Freedom Ring." Catchy title, isn't it?

RUTH. Very, and so original.

DONALD. [*missing her sarcasm*] I thought so. Look here, here's a quotation from one of the most eminent philosophers of the day, Professor R. E. Lentz. I'm using it to help prove my theory. He's a man who really knows what he's talking about. Read what he says here. [*He opens the manuscript and sticks it under her nose, then reads*]. "Man has become a puppet! He eats the accustomed food in the accustomed way, he talks in the conventional way, he dresses in the conventional manner, he even breathes in the conventional way. His soul is dead." See that? [*He taps the book triumphantly*].

RUTH. I'm beginning to see. Before we can free our souls we must get away from our present habits of eating, sleeping, talking, and living.

DONALD. That's it. [*sits beside her talking excitedly*] We must start first on the little things like table manners and insipid, polite parlor conduct, and the false notions about styles of clothes and all that. Once they are proved ridiculous, then the real freedom of the soul will begin to show up.

RUTH. [*rising and turning away down L*] Oh, Donald, why did you have to get all these wild ideas in your head?

DONALD. They aren't wild ideas. They're the basis of my theory on soul freedom which will lead to a perfect social order.

RUTH. [*pleadingly*] We were so happy together before. Let someone else worry about the perfect social order.

DONALD. No, it's up to me. [*rises, stands nobly, facing front*] I must start this movement for soul freedom. It will be my career, my one aim in life.

RUTH. [*desperately*] But you and I, Donald, we've always planned that some day we'd — well, you know our folks have always thought that — [*She takes a step toward him expectantly*].

DONALD. Yes, they thought I'd settle down to being a stodgy businessman, getting married, and doing the same things day after day that thousands of others are doing, with their souls stifled by customs and habits.

RUTH. I had always thought it would be a very pleasant sort of life.

DONALD. That's because your eyes have not been opened, your soul has not been freed from convention. [*He paces back and forth before the davenport*].

RUTH. You used to feel the same way I do.

DONALD. Perhaps I did, but I was young and inexperienced then. Now I see bigger, more important things in life for me. I haven't time to think of love or marriage, not when there are so many souls suffering under the bondage of convention.

RUTH. So you're going to devote your life to guiding all the souls in the world to freedom?

DONALD. [*enthusiastically*] Now you've got me! That's the whole idea! I'm to be the leader of it all. Italy has its Mussolini, Germany its Hitler, and America shall have its Donald Blair.

RUTH. You have a big job ahead of you.

DONALD. Don't I, though. I knew you'd understand that something big like my soul freedom theory must come before any little plans we might have had for getting married. [*RUTH turns away. DONALD does not notice, but goes on excitedly*]. The first thing is to get my book done. That will be the herald for the new movement.

RUTH. How much have you written so far?

DONALD. I've already finished three chapters. [*picks up book from davenport*] Listen, the first [*reads*] is on "The Bunkum of Etiquette" and the second one treats "Comedy of Conventions," while I think I'll call the third one "The Freer the Soul the Fuller the Life." Doesn't that sound inspiring?

RUTH. [*sarcastically*] Very! [*BUDDY and BETTY have come to the window. They stand listening intently*].

DONALD. The whole thing in a nutshell, Ruth, can be

summed up like this; set your soul free and let convention go hang! [*He says this very dramatically*].

RUTH. [*repeating musingly*] Set your soul free and let convention go hang!

DONALD. That's it! Sounds like Kipling, doesn't it? But really, I didn't notice the resemblance until after I had written it.

RUTH. [*dryly*] Kipling probably wouldn't mind if he had known about it.

DONALD. [*stiffly*] I don't believe you take me seriously, Ruth.

RUTH. Oh, yes, I do. Too seriously.

DONALD. [*earnestly*] When you learn more about it and get into it as deeply as I have, you will understand. Let me read you one of the choice passages I have written. [*RUTH sighs, and it is noticeable that if DONALD continues the torture much longer, she will burst into tears. As he reads, she keeps her head turned*]. Oh, here it is — [*He reads*]. "Set your soul free and let convention go hang! Why must the man propose to the woman? Merely because of convention. Why must man make the first advances in love?"

RUTH. [*notices that BUDDY and BETTY have been looking in at the window, listening*] That's enough, Donald.

BUDDY. Heck! Just when it wuz gettin' interestin'.

RUTH. You young rascal! What do you mean by eavesdropping? [*BETTY and BUDDY immediately sneak away*].

DONALD. That's quite all right for them to hear, Ruth. How else should we project our panacea save by having it adopted by the coming younger generation of the world?

MR. BLAIR. [*comes down from upstairs, looks apologetically at RUTH and DONALD*] I hope I'm not interrupting here, but I've just gotta call the office and see if they've got the latest stock reports in yet. [*He starts to the telephone*].

MRS. BLAIR. [*sticking her head in from the kitchen*] May we come in? It's almost time for dinner.

RUTH. [*relieved*] Oh, do come in! [*She moves to table back of davenport*].

DONALD. Yes, do come in. [*MRS. BLAIR, with GRANDMA following, come in from the kitchen. They cross to L; GRANDMA sits in her chair*].

MR. BLAIR. [*at telephone*] Hello, hello! Who is this? Oh, say, Jake, have the evening stock reports come through yet? They have? Well, what's that Bennell airplane stock closing at? [*pause*] Huh, it is? Well, well. That's all I wanted. Say, Jake, did they get to press on time? [*pause*] Yeah, well, five minutes makes a lotta difference. Awright, g-bye. [BETTY and BUDDY rush in].

BETTY. [*excitedly*] Say, Donald, there's some strange guy out here wants to know if this is where you live.

DONALD. Oh, it must be Regis! [*goes to door*] Come on in, Regis. [REGIS LAMONT enters with bag].

DONALD. Did you get the plane parked for the night, Regis?

REGIS. [*loudly and gushingly*] Did I? Say, brother, a cow-barn makes a high-powered airplane hangar — the cows were quite put out, and that's no bull-oney! [*He laughs loudly, drops bag with a thump*].

DONALD. [*arm around REGIS' shoulders, leads him down L*] Regis, this is my father and mother. This is Regis Lamont, my roommate.

MRS. BLAIR. [*shaking hands with REGIS*] I'm so glad to meet you, Mr. Lamont. We've heard so much about you.

REGIS. How are you, Mrs. Blair? Say, Donald didn't tell me he had a mother who was pretty as a coed. [MRS. BLAIR smiles indulgently]. How do you do, Mr. Blair?

MR. BLAIR. [*shaking hands*] Glad to meet any friends of Donald's. He seems to have had a great time up at your place.

REGIS. Mighty glad to have Donald home with me.

DONALD. And this is my Grandmother, Regis.

GRANDMA. Howdy do, highflyer.

REGIS. [*walking over to GRANDMA's chair and shaking hands with her*] How are you, Grandma?

DONALD. [*turns to BETTY, who is standing down R with BUDDY, RUTH behind*] And this is my sister, Betty. [*He crosses in front of davenport*].

BETTY. [*haughtily to DONALD*] Miss Blair, if you please. [*to REGIS*] How do you do, I'm sure.

DONALD. And this is Mr. Jenkins.

REGIS. How do you do, Mr. Jenkins?

BUDDY. [*proud to be called "Mr. Jenkins"*] How do you do?

DONALD. [*indicating RUTH*] Miss Jenkins, may I present Mr. Lamont? [*RUTH steps down R*].

REGIS. [*looking RUTH over approvingly, lets out a whistle*] Well, I should hope! And Donald told me I'd probably find this town dull! [*He goes to RUTH, shakes hands, holding her hand for an unnecessarily long time*].

GRANDMA. I hain't died of boredom yet!

MRS. BLAIR. [*coming over to C by MR. BLAIR*] Ruthie is the girl Donald is going to marry. I suppose you know that? [*DONALD frowns and moves back LC*].

REGIS. [*astonished*] This is a surprise. Don, old boy, how could you ever keep such an entrancing secret from me? [*looks at RUTH*] Well, even your best roommate won't tell you everything!

MRS. BLAIR. And now I have a little surprise for you! Tomorrow evening we are going to have a little announcement party, just for the immediate families, you know, to celebrate the engagement.

MR. BLAIR. And I'm gonna have the society editor make a nice little story of it. [*He stands at C, teetering on his heels*].

[*RUTH turns her head away to hide her tears*].

DONALD. [*standing a little LC*] I believe I should offer an explanation, now that the family is all assembled. I have something I must tell you. Ruth and I are not going to be married! [*There is a dead silence for a minute*].

MRS. BLAIR. [*falteringly*] Not going to be — why, Donald, Ruthie, why, what's happened?

DONALD. Nothing's happened except that I have no time for love and marriage. I'm devoting my life to the cause of Soul Freedom! [*The family remain speechless, as if a bombshell had exploded in their midst. Then MRS. BLAIR utters a little moan and sinks into the davenport. All the rest stare at DONALD, openmouthed. RUTH stands with head averted. REGIS is plainly amused, while DONALD stands erect, as if he had just voiced a great proclamation*].

GRANDMA. [*rising, nonchalantly*] Well, let's go eat dinner. Only the fat diet young!

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE: *Same as Act I*TIME: *Afternoon, two days later*

GRANDMA BLAIR *is seated in her armchair L, busily quilting at rise of curtain. RUTH enters cautiously from door rear RC. She seems relieved when she sees GRANDMA.*

RUTH. [*crossing quickly to her*] Oh, Grandma, I'm so glad I found you alone. I came over especially to talk to you.

GRANDMA. [*pushing footstool out for RUTH to sit on*] Jist sit down, Ruthie. I kinda figured mebbe you'd be a trifle upset and wantin' to talk to somebody.

RUTH. [*notices that GRANDMA is quilting*] Why, you're not working on that same quilt that you'd intended for — for Donald and me, are you, Grandma?

GRANDMA. I reckon I am, and why not, Ruthie? 'Tain't gonna do no harm to have it done, even if it does have to wait quite a spell afore you have any use for it.

RUTH. [*sitting on low stool beside GRANDMA*] I'm afraid it will be a long, long time before I have any use for a quilt.

GRANDMA. Now you listen to me, child. You hain't takin' seriously all them tomfoolery notions Donald's got in his head, now are you?

RUTH. [*sadly*] I guess there's nothing else for me to do. Why, he's told me point-blank that he doesn't have time to think of marriage and that he thinks soul freedom is the only —

GRANDMA. Ruthie, did Donald say he didn't love you?

RUTH. [*hesitatingly*] Well, no, not exactly, but he —

GRANDMA. Now answer me this. You're in love with Donald pretty bad, ain't you?

RUTH. [*choking*] Oh, Grandma, he's the only one I could ever care for. Oh, I don't think I'll ever be happy again.

GRANDMA. I calculated things wuz jist about that way. Now, Ruthie, you stop snifflin' and listen to me. I got a plan in my noodle that's gonna straighten things up between you and Donald.

RUTH. [*still crying*] It's too late to do any good. It's all over. Donald doesn't want me; he wants a revolution.

GRANDMA. He may think that right now, but you jist calm yourself and get some sense into you. You hain't such a spineless creature that you'd give up without a whimper, air you? Get your man! There's your battle cry! [*She cackles*].

RUTH. It's no use, Grandma. [*She rises, walks C*]. I've tried everything these last few days to get close to Donald, but he's all wrapped up in that book he's writing on soul freedom. Why, I've been nice to him and —

GRANDMA. That's jist your trouble, young lady. Bein' nice to him! Humph! That's jist eggzactly what he don't need none of. What you've gotta do, young lady, is fight fire with fire!

RUTH. [*wonderingly*] Fight fire with fire?

GRANDMA. Yes, sirree! Give that young in-ty-lectual a dose of his own soul freedom medicine, and he'll come round in a jiffy.

RUTH. But what do you mean, Grandma? How can I give him a dose of his own soul freedom medicine? [*She comes back and sits on stool*].

GRANDMA. Ruthie, where's your intelligence? Now, mark what I say. He believes in the soul freedom he's read about in books and the soul freedom he's writin' about. But has he ever practiced it? Has he ever seen it worked out? No, sirree! He hain't, and there's the catch.

RUTH. Do you mean that you want me to pretend that I believe in the new soul freedom too, and that I think conventions are silly?

GRANDMA. Now you're comin' around to showin' some sense. That's persactly what I do mean. A stitch in time'll tangle him in his own line. [*She cackles*].

RUTH. But I don't see how I can do that. Why, I, well, I really think this soul freedom is absurd!

GRANDMA. Course it is, and you're gonna make Donald believe it is afore you're through with him. Let soul freedom ring! Rats! Let soul freedom sting! And this is where he gets stung!

RUTH. He is so set on the idea that I don't see how I could possibly change him, Grandma.

GRANDMA. Well, I see, and if you use some of the horse sense you were born with, Donald'll be running after you in a week's time.

RUTH. [*fervently*] I'd do anything to have him back again, Grandma!

GRANDMA. All right, now you're talkin'! What earthly good is this highflyer Regis doin' around here? None-a-tall! And he's the very one for you to practice on, and if that don't bring Donald around, I'll give up and join the Sewing Circle.

RUTH. [*getting up*] Oh, I see it all. I'm to believe in the new movement and forget all conventions with Regis and beat Donald at his own game, is that it?

GRANDMA. That's the idey, and the sooner you start your campaign the better. Make hay while that Sonny boy shines around here! [*She cackles*].

RUTH. [*warming up to the idea*] Regis is just the type to work on!

GRANDMA. You can trump that flying ace, and that'll take the trick!

RUTH. [*enthusiastically*] Grandma, you're marvelous! [*throws her arms around GRANDMA*] And I have a feeling that I'm going to make this plan work. [*She walks across R to the davenport as if planning her campaign*].

GRANDMA. I may be seventy-two years old, but I got young ideas! [*She cackles*].

DONALD and REGIS come downstairs.

REGIS. Come on, old man, forget this worry about your book long enough to go out and have one round of golf with me. You look positively puny, my boy! You need the recreation; this soul freedom business is tying you down! [*They pause at the foot of the stairs*].

DONALD. [*holding open manuscript*] Really, I'd like to, Regis, but I've just got to get this book under way. [*takes letter from pocket*] Why, only today I received a letter from my publisher, and he's anxious to look over the manuscript. Says it sounds new and different. [*sees RUTH*] Oh, hello, Ruth.

RUTH. Hello, Donald.

REGIS. [*rushing over to RUTH*] Greetings, beautiful! If I had known you were down here, I'd have slid down the banister to save time getting here.

RUTH. [*smiling*] Regis, you're a philanderer!

DONALD. [*crossing to desk*] Yes, he is. He's been trying to

persuade me to go out for some golf when he knows I must be working on my book. *[turns]* Say, maybe you'd like to go with Regis, Ruth?

REGIS. And would I like that? How would you feel, gorgeous, toward a game of golf?

RUTH. I'm willing to take a shot at any game, am I not, Grandma? *[She gives GRANDMA a knowing look]*.

GRANDMA. That's right. Lan' sakes, too much quilting makes me nervous as a settin' hen. *[rises]* I must get up on my magazine readin'. Do you mind if I take this *True Story*, Donald? I'm readin' a continued love story in it. *[She picks up magazine from table]*.

DONALD. *[haughtily]* That is not my *True Story*. *[He sits down at desk and opens manuscript]*.

GRANDMA. Don't matter. This will put me to sleep as quick as anything. A confession magazine is good for the soul. *[She cackles as she exits into her room]*.

RUTH. *[sits invitingly on davenport]* What do you think of Donald's soul freedom propaganda, Regis?

REGIS. Oh, he'll get over it. Just like an attack of stomach-ache, a few big pains but it doesn't last. *[He sits down by RUTH]*.

RUTH. I'm not so sure about that. Anyway, I hope he doesn't get over it. I think it's a fine idea, and his book probably will be a great success.

REGIS. *[looking at her in honest surprise]* Don't tell me you believe in soul freedom?

RUTH. Why not? I'm tired of being bound by conventions. All my life I've had to do certain things merely because they were the proper and accepted things to do. I want my soul to be free. I want to come and go as I please, talk as I please, dress as I please, and *[moves closer to REGIS, looking at him coyly]* love as I please.

REGIS. *[startled]* Well, maybe I ought to get interested in the new movement, too.

RUTH. Seriously, don't you think that soul freedom is the greatest development toward breaking down the barriers and sham of convention?

DONALD. *[sits erect and takes notice]* What was that, Ruth?

What was that statement about breaking away from convention? [*He rises and comes over to davenport*].

RUTH. I was merely telling Regis that soul freedom breaks down the barriers and sham of convention.

DONALD. [*enthusiastically*] That's great! Why, it's just the title I need for my next chapter! Let's see, now, [*pauses to think*] "Soul Freedom Banishes Barriers of Convention." That's going to work in fine! [*hurries back to desk to resume writing*] Say, Ruth, I'm sure glad you're coming around to seeing my views on things. Great! [*He immediately forgets RUTH and REGIS and resumes writing*].

RUTH. [*moving still closer to REGIS*] Oh, I'm strong for the idea.

REGIS. [*hesitating*] I'm not backward, but [*looks at DONALD and moves away from RUTH*] what about him? You're supposed to be engaged to him.

RUTH. Engaged? That's just an absurd convention. Why should I be bothered with a little thing like an engagement when there are such attractive roommates running around loose?

REGIS. [*dubiously*] Yes, I know, but after all —

RUTH. It's going to be such a relief to have my soul freed. The very next time I'm invited to a party, instead of saying to the hostess, "I'll be delighted to come," — the conventional response — you know — I'm going to speak right up and say, "I wouldn't think of coming; I'm always bored to death at your parties." [*While she is speaking, she kicks off her shoes, and sits with legs outstretched, wiggling her toes*].

REGIS. [*looking at her feet*] What — what did you do that for?

RUTH. Oh, I've decided that it's an uncomfortable convention to wear these things. Hereafter I shall wear soft moccasins or no shoes at all, everywhere I go.

REGIS. [*doubtfully*] But won't people think it strange?

RUTH. [*picking up a shoe and holding it out for inspection*] I won't care, my soul will be free. Wearing shoes — what a silly convention. Convention go hang! [*She tosses the shoe over her L shoulder. It almost strikes DONALD, who looks up in amazement*].

DONALD. Say, what is this?

RUTH. [*paying no attention to him*] We won't have to take

long to get acquainted, Regis. It's old-fashioned to think you couldn't hold my hand just because we've known each other only a few days. [*She snuggles closer*].

REGIS. Say, I think I'm going to like this soul freedom idea, after all. The freer the soul, the better time I have. [*He slips his arm around RUTH. DONALD grunts, then goes back to his writing*].

RUTH. We'll free our souls together. We'll eat pie with our fingers, play golf in the moonlight, and say "darn" even to our elders.

REGIS. It sounds great! [*He holds her closer*].

RUTH. Soul freedom is going to teach me lots of things!

REGIS. I'll make a pretty good teacher.

RUTH. Will you? Let's see. [*holds up her lips to be kissed.*

REGIS *hesitates, then puts his arms around her and kisses her.* RUTH *sighs*]. Oh, Professor! [*She holds up her lips to be kissed again*].

REGIS. Listen, don't get me started! [*RUTH offers to be kissed again, puts both arms around him, and runs her fingers through his hair. REGIS settles back with a sigh. DONALD picks up his manuscript and rises without looking up*].

DONALD. Listen to this. How does this sound — [*He starts toward davenport, sees RUTH and REGIS in an embrace. He stares*]. Pardon me, but — [*They pay no attention. DONALD clears his throat and tries again*]. Why, er, I say, pardon me but — [*REGIS jumps and tries to draw away, but RUTH keeps her arms around him and looks at DONALD inquiringly*].

RUTH. [*calmly*] Don't bother to excuse yourself. You haven't done anything. This "pardon me" stuff is just a silly convention.

DONALD. [*flustered*] Well — I was just going to remark that, well, this passage here, it — [*breaks off angrily*] Say, what do you two mean by all this, anyway?

RUTH. [*airily*] It doesn't mean anything except that Regis and I are doing a little soul freeing.

REGIS. [*flustered*] Sure, that's all! [*He laughs nervously*].

DONALD. Really, Ruth, I thought you were a bit more reserved in your actions, I must say.

RUTH. [*innocently*] Why, what's wrong, Donald?

DONALD. Well, it isn't exactly conventional for a girl to conduct herself in this manner.

RUTH. I'm merely setting my soul free, and convention can go hang! [*She snaps her fingers*].

DONALD. But, Ruth, you're entirely too free with your —

RUTH. Free? Of course! Why, I think your soul freedom idea is fine, Donald. I've never been so enthusiastic about anything before in all my life.

REGIS. [*still nervous*] Me too. I think it's plenty O.K.!

DONALD. [*at a loss for what to say*] Well, er, ah, of course. Excuse me again for interrupting. [*He goes back to desk, but does not resume writing. He sits glumly watching them out of the corner of his eye*].

REGIS. Let's go somewhere tonight and dance, take a ride. Oh, anything!

RUTH. [*snuggling closer*] I'd love to! I'm free to go any place, do anything! [DONALD, *listening in, registers displeasure*].

REGIS. I sure didn't expect to get such a break when I came here! Why didn't I come home with Donald before!

RUTH. We probably wouldn't have had such a good time, 'cause I didn't believe in soul freedom then.

REGIS. [*looking down at her*] Boy, I'm glad you've been converted!

RUTH. Conventionally speaking, my soul freedom would be improper. I would have to know you a week or two before I could go dancing with you — I would probably have to have a chaperon. Isn't that a quaint old convention? It's much more fun this way.

REGIS. It sure is. I guess Donald knew what he was talking about when he started this soul freedom business! [DONALD *tries to resume his writing, but cannot keep from listening to them*].

RUTH. [*watching DONALD furtively*] I do hope there's a moon tonight. I used to get such a big thrill when Donald and I rode along in the moonlight. [DONALD *winces at this, clears his throat, but she pretends not to notice him*]. I thought then that he was the most wonderful boy in the world. He was my ideal. I wouldn't have dreamed of going out with anyone but him — then. I used to snuggle close to him [*casts a sidewise glance at DONALD*] as we sat under a great big moon and —

REGIS. [*romantically*] There will be a moon. We'll have dinner together, dance together, and ride together in the

moonlight, just we two. And we'll ride on and on in the moonlight. [*His words fade away as he embraces RUTH fervently*].

DONALD. [*unable to stand it any longer, leaps to his feet and shouts*] Good night! I can't get anything done here! [*RUTH and REGIS are startled into breaking apart. DONALD speaks sarcastically*]. You don't mind if I leave you?

RUTH. [*her arms still around REGIS*] Oh, certainly not!

REGIS. Not at all, Donald. [*DONALD snorts and stalks upstairs, pausing on the landing to take a last look*].

RUTH. [*immediately drawing away from REGIS now that DONALD is gone*] We forgot all about that golf game. Let's change it to a ride; it's marvelous outside. [*She gets her shoes, puts them on glumly*].

REGIS. Anything you say. [*They rise. BETTY and BUDDY enter. BETTY has a jacket thrown over one shoulder*].

BETTY. I'll say it's swell outside! Buddy and I were gonna get the gang and go swimmin', but I knew Mother'd raise the dickens. [*She comes down LC*].

RUTH. And I wouldn't have let Buddy go. He knows he has to take his music lesson this afternoon.

BUDDY. Migosh, Ruth! Why don't you lay off me? I'm not gonna spend an afternoon like this poundin' on any old pyana! [*He stands at table in back of davenport and pounds it like a piano*].

REGIS. I wouldn't either, Buddy. Ruth and I are off for a ride. Sorry you kids can't go along. [*He and RUTH rise and go to door*].

RUTH. [*at door, rear LC*] Yes, you'd better run over home to your practicing, Buddy. [*RUTH and REGIS exit*].

BETTY. [*sitting on davenport*] You know, Buddy, since Donald's home, Mother doesn't say one thing about your coming over here so much.

BUDDY. I guess she don't care, then, if we have dates. [*He draws himself up proudly, comes down C*].

BETTY. No, she's so upset about Donald and his soul freedom talk that she can't think of anything else.

BUDDY. I don't see why she should worry over that. I think Donald's right! Yep, soul freedom's a great thing. Why, all it needs is a little advertising. Look here. [*grabs magazine from*

table back of davenport and points to ads. Gets dramatic with salesman-talk attitude] Are you a wall flower? Believe in soul freedom and be the life of the party! [*thumbs through magazine*] Are you troubled with inso-inso-mania, or B.O.? Have you athlete's foot? Soul freedom will make a new person of you! [*He closes the magazine with a flourish and launches into his speech*]. They all jeered at me when I sat down at the piano, but three weeks later they applauded when I broke the barriers of convention and threw them out the window. [*pantomimes this*] Why? Four out of every five believe in it! You too, [*lunges at BETTY*] can learn the secret of this amazing popularity! What is it? Soul Freedom! Ten easy lessons! We shatter convention by asking no down payment. Advocate soul freedom. It satisfies! [*He bows as BETTY claps her hands*]. The applause is deafening! [*He drops his dramatic pose and becomes just BUDDY again*].

BETTY. Yeah, I feel that way about it, too. You know Ruth and Regis have kinda taken on the idea.

BUDDY. [*thoughtfully, sitting on davenport*] You know sometimes I think we oughta practice it.

BETTY. [*quickly*] I've thought about that too, but just how do you mean?

BUDDY. Well, we don't want everybody telling us what to do, do we?

BETTY. No, we don't. But everybody seems to tell us, just the same.

BUDDY. Do they ever! You'd think we didn't have any minds of our own! [*sarcastically*] A guy fifteen years old has to be practicin' on a pyana!

BETTY. You know, Buddy, I can't even tell Mother I've got your OAK pin. She'd have a catfit!

BUDDY. [*seriously*] It isn't right. Makin' us wash our ears, go to bed at nine o'clock, and pick up our clothes when we take 'em off. When you get to be as old as we are, you oughta be able to enjoy freedom. No one should prevent us from doing as we please.

BETTY. Yessir! Now, that's Donald's idea. He says your soul oughta go free and let prevention hang itself!

BUDDY. We oughta get away from here, away from our

families, some place where we can let our souls go free and not have anybody to tell us we gotta do this or we gotta do that because all nice kids do it.

BETTY. Yeah, I'd like to show them a thing or two.

BUDDY. They think we're too young to know what soul freedom is! Humph!

BETTY. [*suddenly*] I'll tell you what, Buddy, let's do go away some place!

BUDDY. Do you mean it?

BETTY. Sure! Why not? We're not infants any more.

BUDDY. [*hesitatingly*] But, Betty, do you think we oughta? Why, they'd be worried. Anyway, I'm scared of your mother.

BETTY. Gosh, you needn't be, silly. Anyway, it would do them good to worry a little about us. We'll teach them they can't tie our souls down.

BUDDY. It sounds pretty good. Anyway, Donald said it was up to the younger generation to start the movement for soul freedom.

BETTY. Sure — we could start a movement on soul freedom for kids under sixteen — no dish washing, no piano practicing.

BUDDY. Gosh, a lot of kids would be grateful to us for getting 'em outa that!

BETTY. Wouldn't they, though? We'll start in a big town where there's lots of soul-tied-up kids.

BUDDY. [*brightening*] Well, what town will we start it in?

BETTY. Oh, gosh, I don't know. Maybe we better get on a train and go till we come to some place that sounds interesting — Reno, maybe, or Kalamazoo!

BUDDY. [*getting enthusiastic*] Salt Lake City! That'd be a swell place to start our new movement. Everyone there is a moron — you know, a man has three or four wives.

BETTY. [*excited*] Yeah, imagine those poor kids having that many mothers to tell 'em what to do. Their souls sure do need to get loose.

BUDDY. Sure — that's where we'll go! [*suddenly*] But, Betty, we haven't got any money!

BETTY. Gee whiz, that's right. Haven't you got any?

BUDDY. [*emptying his pockets*] Only seventeen cents and a buckeye. That won't get us very far!

Convention Go Hang!

BETTY. [*disconsolately*] Heck! I knew something would come up to put a jinx on our plans. We never do get — [*telephone rings. BETTY saunters over to telephone table. The telephone rings again; she grabs it off angrily, then answers in a bored tone*]. Hello. [*pause*] Yeah. [*pause*] No, Mr. Blair isn't here. Don't know when he'll be home. If he's not at the office, I don't know where he is. This is Betty. [*pause*] What? [*pause*] Huh? [*pause*] Well, I don't know about that — maybe Father wouldn't want me to — [*pause*] If it's important I suppose I could bring it down. You want me to bring it right away? [*pause*] All right. [*Hangs up*].

BUDDY. [*suspiciously*] Who wuz that?

BETTY. [*coming to L end of davenport*] Aw, that wuz Lew James.

BUDDY. That old swindler. What did he want?

BETTY. Oh, he wanted to talk to "mister" Blair. He's ready to buy back some no good stock he sold Father the other day.

BUDDY. He's always selling somebody a gold brick.

BETTY. This is airplane stock. Course Father thinks it's good, but Lew must have had a change of heart, 'cause he said he'd take it back if I'd bring it down right away. Said something about shares — maybe means Father's share and his share.

BUDDY. I'll bet there's a catch in it somewhere.

BETTY. No, he said he'd have the money ready for it as soon as I brought the stock down. [*goes to desk drawer and gets stock, takes it from envelope, puts envelope back in drawer*] See, here it is. Bennell airplane stock. [*She comes to R end of davenport. They look at the stock together*].

BUDDY. [*gloomily*] Gee, wisht it wuz ours. Then we'd have money enough to go away on and start our soul freeing!

BETTY. [*suddenly*] That's an idea — we'll borrow it!

BUDDY. Gosh, Betty, we oughtn't to do that. What would your father say? We better ask him first.

BETTY. No, we don't! That'd be what we're supposed to do. That's what Donald calls a convention, and convention is out! Anyway, he's probably forgot he had it.

BUDDY. But how much is it worth?

BETTY. I don't know. Maybe a hundred dollars.

BUDDY. Oh, gosh, Betty, that's a lot of money!

BETTY. [*eagerly*] Sure is! We can do a lot on that, can't we?

BUDDY. Can we? Say, you know, we can rent an office and fix it up swell, maybe with a soda fountain, and the kids can come there and tell us their soul troubles.

BETTY. Sure, and kids all over the world would send us money for our advice, and then we'd pay Father back!

BUDDY. And then when we got lots of money we'll come back and see the folks, and will they be proud of us! [*They both laugh gleefully*].

BETTY. [*stopping suddenly*] But listen, I gotta pack. We gotta get goin'. [*She starts for the stairway*].

BUDDY. [*stopping her*] No, don't take time. After we see Lew we'll have plenty of money to buy anything we need.

BETTY. Awright, but I gotta write a note. I'll leave it under Grandma's door. [*She runs to desk and starts writing*].

BUDDY. Gosh, I hope no one comes before we get gone! [*He flops on the davenport with both arms back of his head and muses*]. After we finish in Salt Lake City, we'll start in Paris.

BETTY. [*writing at the desk, without looking up*] Naw, I don't wanta go to Paris; there's nobody but foreigners there.

BUDDY. Well, foreign kids got souls, haven't they?

BETTY. [*jumping up from desk and folding note*] There! That'll fix 'em. [*BETTY runs over and slips note under GRANDMA'S door L. BUDDY gets up ready to go. He suddenly looks out of the window*].

BUDDY. Gee whiz, Betty, here comes your father! What'll we do?

BETTY. Oh, gosh! I know — beat it through the kitchen door and out the back way! [*BUDDY is so excited he starts to run the wrong way and gets to the stairway before BETTY screams at him*].

BETTY. Here, this way! Come on! [*They exit running through the kitchen door. MR. BLAIR rushes in, throws his hat on the chair, and calls excitedly*].

MR. BLAIR. Sylvia! Sylvia! Where are you? Come here quick!

MRS. BLAIR. [*from upstairs*] What is it, Richard? Is anything wrong?

MR. BLAIR. [*calling excitedly upstairs*] Hurry up, Sylvia! I've got great news! [*to himself*] Oh, boy! Who said I wasn't a clever businessman!

He rubs hands together in a self-satisfied manner, then goes to radio and turns it on.

MRS. BLAIR. [*coming downstairs*] What is the matter with you, Richard? Is your soul yelling to get freed or something? Honestly, if I hear another word about soul freedom I'll lose my mind. Donald has been driving me crazy.

MR. BLAIR. Soul freedom be hanged! What do you think has happened, Sylvia?

MRS. BLAIR. [*coming down LC*] I haven't the slightest idea, but I'm prepared for the worst!

MR. BLAIR. [*triumphantly*] That airplane stock of mine has gone up fifteen points since noon! We're rich, Sylvia! [*He grabs her and whirls her around*].

MRS. BLAIR. [*dazed*] Do you mean that stock is really worth something?

MR. BLAIR. Worth something! Honey, it's worth \$30,000 cold cash right this minute, and going up!

MRS. BLAIR. [*incredulously*] That airplane stock worth money?

MR. BLAIR. [*crossing excitedly in front of davenport to down R*] Boy, I'll bet Lew James would give his soul to have that stock back. We're gonna make a fortune!

MRS. BLAIR. Oh, Richard, I can't believe it! You're sure it's true?

MR. BLAIR. Dead sure! Most sensational rise in the stock market this year!

MRS. BLAIR. [*getting excited, comes to L end of davenport*] Oh, Richard, now we can have that new frigidaire!

MR. BLAIR. We can have one in every room in this house! No, not in this house, we're gonna have a new one!

MRS. BLAIR. A new house?

MR. BLAIR. Sure. What would you say to a nice three-story brick mansion with a terraced flower garden and —

MRS. BLAIR. But I don't like brick houses, Richard, they're old-fashioned. Now, cut stone is the newest thing for a big house.

MR. BLAIR. All right, it'll be cut stone. A big stone house right up in town with a swell —

MRS. BLAIR. Oh, no, Richard, we want it out in an exclusive suburb with lots of ground and —

MR. BLAIR. Say, mebbe that would be better. Then I can have my own golf course!

MRS. BLAIR. And we can afford a new car!

MR. BLAIR. [*slapping his knee*] A new car! We'll have three of 'em, one for you, one for me, and a sport roadster for Granmaw!

MRS. BLAIR. Oh, I'm so happy, Richard! [*They throw their arms around each other*].

MR. BLAIR. Let's get the stock reports! [*He goes to radio. He dials along and finally they hear the announcer*].

RADIO. Acme tool —

MR. BLAIR. [*excitedly*] Sh, sh!! Be quiet! I've got 'em!

RADIO. Appleton consolidated — 23, B.T. and D. Limited — 501, and Bennell airplane stock, which climbed today, is still rising and at this hour is selling at an even 90, making a nice turnover for those who bought it recently at \$6. [MR. BLAIR turns to music. Music lasts until end of act].

MR. BLAIR. By golly, it's gone up two more points since I left the office! It's worth \$45,000 right now. I'm gonna sell while the selling's good! [*He rushes to desk*].

MRS. BLAIR. [*sitting on L end of davenport*] Yes, yes, let's don't take any chances, Richard. It might crash. Take it right down and sell it.

MR. BLAIR. [*fumbling in drawer*] Boy, Lew James will be a sick man when he hears of this!

MRS. BLAIR. Yes, this will kinda get Lew's goat!

MR. BLAIR. [*still fumbling in drawer*] Didn't I put it in this drawer, Sylvia? Oh, boy! \$45,000!

MRS. BLAIR. Yes, it's right down in the bottom of that drawer, Richard. And we'll get some new living room furniture. This is getting shabby! [*He looks at davenport*].

MR. BLAIR. I'll be hanged if I can find it. [*He starts throwing papers out*].

MRS. BLAIR. [*rising and crossing to desk, pushing him aside*] Here, let me get it. I know right where it is. You always tear things up so, Richard.

MR. BLAIR. I gotta hurry, wanta get down there 'fore the office closes.

MRS. BLAIR. [*rummaging in drawer*] Now, that's funny. I thought it was right in here.

MR. BLAIR. It couldn't have been mislaid, could it?

MRS. BLAIR. No, no. It's right here someplace.

MR. BLAIR. I think I'll sell the newspaper and retire now.

MRS. BLAIR. Yes, you should, Richard. It's about time we enjoyed life.

MR. BLAIR. [*getting impatient*] Well, where in the dickens is that stock? Maybe you put it in the top drawer.

MRS. BLAIR. I haven't touched it. Now, why can't we find it?

MR. BLAIR. Here, let me help you. [*They start dumping things out of the drawer*]. Hum, that isn't it, and neither is this. [*He throws papers R and L*].

MRS. BLAIR. Richard, there's something funny about this! [*looks up, frightened*] Here's the envelope — and it's empty!

MR. BLAIR. Empty? Good Heavens! Maybe it fell out in the drawer.

MRS. BLAIR. Look in the other drawers! [*They frantically empty everything in the drawers*].

MR. BLAIR. We've got to find it!

MRS. BLAIR. Richard, it's gone!

MR. BLAIR. No, no, it can't be! [*He goes through papers on floor*].

MRS. BLAIR. Somebody's stolen it!

MR. BLAIR. [*looking dazed*] I can't believe it! Our stock gone!

MRS. BLAIR. Oh, Richard!

MR. BLAIR. My one big chance, my whole fortune gone! \$45,000 — just like that! [*He snaps fingers weakly*].

MRS. BLAIR. [*starting to cry*] What are we going to do, Richard?

MR. BLAIR. [*staring dully*] \$45,000 gone, gone!

MRS. BLAIR. [*in tears*] Oh, Richard, I can't bear it! What are we going to do? [*GRANDMA comes out of her room down L carrying note*].

GRANDMA. Well, you'd better do something and do it right

away! Listen to this note Betty left under my door. [MR. and MRS. BLAIR *still at desk, look up; DONALD has appeared on the stairs*].

GRANDMA. [*reading*] "Dear Grandma — Break the glad tidings to the family that Buddy and I are leaving. We believe in soul freedom. We're going someplace to start our own movement to free souls. Tell Donald thanks for the idea. Betty." [MRS. BLAIR *screams and falls fainting. MR. BLAIR catches her, assists her to davenport, and starts frantically to fan her*].

MR. BLAIR. Grandma, Grandma, get a glass of water, hurry, now! [GRANDMA *rushes to kitchen*]. There, there, Sylvia. Donald, Donald, you call the police right away, get a move on you! Give 'em a description of the kids. There, there, Sylvia. [GRANDMA *returns with water; MR. BLAIR holds the glass of water to Sylvia's lips*]. Calm yourself; everything's gonna come out all right. We'll find the kids; don't worry now. Oh lordy, lordy! [DONALD *stands looking on helplessly. MRS. BLAIR comes to with a little moan, then sits up and cries hysterically*].

MRS. BLAIR. Oh, oh, my poor baby Elizabeth! Oh, how dreadful! What are we going to do? Oh, my child, my baby's gone!

MR. BLAIR. [*at L of MRS. BLAIR, says grimly*] And our money's gone!

GRANDMA. [*on MRS. BLAIR'S R, looks at DONALD*] Now you're getting your soul freedom idea put into practice. [DONALD *rushes to telephone. RUTH and REGIS come in, arm in arm*].

DONALD. [*stuttering, telephone in hand*] Oh, Ruth! Regis, have you heard what's happened?

RUTH. [*stopping him*] Wait! We have some news for you!

REGIS. Boy, have we! And how! [*They all turn to look at RUTH and REGIS who have come down C*].

RUTH. Regis and I believe that we have freed our souls. I have asked him to marry me — right away — tomorrow.

DONALD. [*not comprehending at first*] You what? You asked Regis to marry you — are you crazy?

RUTH. [*calmly*] Not at all! I've set my soul free and let convention go hang! [DONALD *stares at them openmouthed. The rest of the family is shocked into speechlessness. GRANDMA looks on wisely*].

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE: *Same*TIME: *Morning, the next day*

At rise of curtain, MR. BLAIR is lying on the davenport. He is fully clothed, with evidence of having slept there all night. He is snoring sonorously. From the radio come the morning health exercises, the counts of which keep perfect time with MR. BLAIR's snores.

RADIO. One, two, three, four, breathe deeply, one, two, three, four. Now once again, one, two, three, four, and halt! That finishes our late setting-up exercises. Don't forget to breathe deeply all day and drink lots of water. Now we are ready for the correct time, which comes to you direct from the observatory. When you hear the tone beat it will be exactly nine o'clock Central Standard Time. Ten seconds — five seconds — get ready [*ping*] nine o'clock. It is now time for the news flashes, which come to you through the courtesy of the Westcott Power and Light Company. [*By this time MR. BLAIR is wide awake and stretches himself as he listens*]. No trace has been found of the two high school students, Elizabeth Blair, fourteen, and Clarence Jenkins, fifteen, who disappeared from their home in Forestown last night or early yesterday afternoon. Immediately following the disappearance of the children, it was discovered that the Blair home had been robbed of approximately \$50,000 in stocks. Detectives working on the case have advanced the theory that the burglars were apprehended by the children and that the children were kidnapped by the burglars. [*Music comes on and continues through act. MR. BLAIR gets up stiffly, groans, and ambles to the front door. He goes outside and comes in with the morning paper and a bottle of milk. GRANDMA comes groping from her room, feeling her way around*].

GRANDMA. That you, Richard? Did you sleep well?

RICHARD. [*sarcastically*] Yeah, I slept fine! [*exits L, to kitchen*].

GRANDMA. Where did I leave my durn spectacles? [*stumbles over footstool down L*] Darn it! [*RUTH comes in the door rear RC. She is dressed in a smart traveling outfit and carries a bag*].

RUTH. Why, what's the matter, Grandma?

GRANDMA. Oh, I'm bangin' up my shins trying to locate my doggone glasses.

RUTH. [*looking around*] Let me find them for you. Here they are, right on top of the radio.

GRANDMA. [*putting on her glasses*] Purty soon they'll be tellin' me that if I free my soul I won't need to wear specs no more. Now what's on your mind, Ruthie?

RUTH. Grandma, I've been thinking all night. I can't go through with this. I'm so worried about Buddy and Betty, I can't think of anything else.

GRANDMA. Fiddlesticks! Them two young pups wouldn't go no farther than the city limits. I know them youngsters!

RUTH. I do hope they are safe. But this pretended wedding with Regis, Grandma — I've got to give it up!

GRANDMA. [*sitting in her armchair, down L*] So you be givin' up tryin' to win Donald back, eh, Ruth? Lost your spunk?

RUTH. [*beginning to cry, sits on stool*] Oh, Grandma, it hasn't done any good. He just doesn't care for me and never will. And I can't endure Regis any longer. I'm sick of the whole affair!

GRANDMA. Now, you stick by your guns, Ruth, jist a little while longer. This battle's jist gettin' good, and now you wanta retreat!

RUTH. But I can't go through with it, I tell you, I can't!

GRANDMA. There's still time. You can back out at the last minute. Hang on a while longer!

RUTH. [*bravely*] I'm game, but I'm so scared, Grandma.

GRANDMA. Faint heart never won free soul lover! [*Cackles. REGIS comes downstairs, carrying bags*].

REGIS. [*coming down LC to RUTH*] Good morning, wonderful; all packed? Hi, Grandma, how's my tootsy wootsy this morning?

GRANDMA. Rarin' to go! [*goes to stairway and calls*] Donald! Donald! Come down here and drive these children to the flyin' field.

REGIS. [*hurriedly*] Oh, no, no, don't call him. We'll get there all right. [*GRANDMA cackles and exits into her room*].

REGIS. Say, Ruth, I got a swell idea this morning. Why not have the ceremony in the plane, with the minister in a flying

suit, and you hold a parachute in your arms instead of a bridal bouquet?

RUTH. [*sarcastically, as she moves to front of davenport*] A great idea — then instead of throwing my bouquet, I could throw the parachute — and me with it.

REGIS. [*following her*] That's wonderful. Say, am I getting a clever little girl as well as a beautiful one! [*He starts to kiss her*].

RUTH. Don't, Regis! [*She sees DONALD coming downstairs, and changes her mind*]. Oh, Regis! [*She lifts her face to be kissed*].

DONALD. [*glumly*] Good morning, Ruth. [*glares at REGIS*] Morning.

RUTH. We'd better be going. I'm so excited about riding in that plane!

REGIS. [*picking up their bags*] O.K., sweetheart. This is one time when the groom is really up in the air about his bride. [*They start arm in arm around R end of davenport, to door*].

DONALD. Wait just a minute! [*comes to L end of davenport*] Now you listen to me! This thing has gone far enough. [*RUTH and REGIS set down their bags and turn*].

RUTH. [*keeping her arm in REGIS'*] Just what do you mean, "far enough"?

DONALD. I mean that you're my girl and you're not going to rush into any silly, half-cocked marriage with a guy you've known only three days.

RUTH. And why not, may I ask?

DONALD. Because I won't stand for it!

REGIS. [*stepping up in front of davenport*] Just what are you going to do about it? You gave us the idea.

DONALD. I won't stand by and see Ruth do something that will make her the talk of the town.

RUTH. You can't object. You said yourself that convention was a false barrier. Why should I care what people say?

DONALD. Well, I say now that you're not going to marry Regis! You're going to stay right here!

REGIS. I guess I'll have something to say about this. Whatever Ruth and I choose to do is none of your affair!

DONALD. Oh, isn't it? Listen, you're not going to get by with stealing the girl I'm in love with and going to marry!

REGIS. Marry? Why, you said you didn't have time for love and marriage —

RUTH. Yes, you did! Because you were going to devote your life to the cause of soul freedom and —

DONALD. [*very vehemently*] I hate soul freedom! [*He turns away down L*].

REGIS. Why, Donald, you're not serious. You don't mean that! [*He laughs*].

DONALD. Don't mean it, eh? Well, I'll show you! [*marches over to desk and grabs manuscript, tears it into shreds*] That's what I think of soul freedom! [*He comes back C, scattering the pieces*].

RUTH. [*trying not to show her pleasure*] But, Donald —

RUTH is standing at R end of davenport, REGIS in front of it, and DONALD at the L end.

DONALD. Shut up!

REGIS. [*angrily*] Listen here, Donald, you can't pull that stuff on me!

DONALD. [*ominously cold*] Just what do you mean?

REGIS. I mean that I'm serious too! I want to marry Ruth, and you won't stop me!

DONALD. [*threateningly*] I won't stop you, eh?

RUTH. [*stepping between them*] Well, let me say something —

REGIS. This is mine and Donald's affair now, Ruth, and I'm going to settle it myself. [*to DONALD*] I'd like to see you stop me!

DONALD. [*grabs RUTH and jerks her out of the way, back LC*] All right! [*He lands a terrific blow on REGIS' chin, which lays him out flat on the floor. DONALD stands menacingly over REGIS, while RUTH eyes DONALD with ecstasy*].

RUTH. [*admiringly*] Oh, Donald! [*She recovers herself and rushes over to help REGIS pick himself up*]. Now, look what you've done! You've ruined everything! [*REGIS gets up painfully*].

DONALD. [*thundering*] Now get out! [*REGIS picks up bag and limps to C and to door. He looks back at DONALD, feels his jaw, and goes on out*].

DONALD. [*to RUTH, who is standing at R end of davenport*] Well, what have you got to say for yourself?

RUTH. [*turning her back on him*] Just this. I think you've made a fool of yourself.

DONALD. [*abashed*] Perhaps I have. I'm sorry, Ruth, but I couldn't stand your having a silly affair with that idiot!

RUTH. Silly affair? I merely took you at your word, Donald; the freer the soul the —

DONALD. You're not really in love with him, Ruth?

RUTH. I don't know. Maybe love is just one of those old-fashioned conventions you've been raving about.

DONALD. Well, I don't choose to have the girl I'm going to marry playing at love with another fellow.

RUTH. [*tauntingly*] Marry? Why, Donald, you said you wouldn't have time to think of marriage.

DONALD. [*going over to her*] I admit I was a fool. I did say a lot of silly things, but I didn't believe them really. Ruth, I, well, darn it, you know I love you. Will you marry me, Ruth? [*She turns away from him*].

GRANDMA. [*entering from her room*] Lan' sakes, look at all this muss on the floor. Where'd Regis take off to?

DONALD. He took off for home — and [*decisively*] he's not coming back! [*He goes in back of davenport, picking up pieces of his book*].

GRANDMA. [*sitting in armchair*] And I didn't get my airplane ride!

MR. BLAIR. [*coming in from kitchen*] Morning, Ruth. No news from Buddy over at your house?

RUTH. [*sitting at R end of davenport*] Nothing at all, Mr. Blair, but we'll surely hear something from them this morning.

MRS. BLAIR. [*coming downstairs, looking worried and sleepless*] Good morning, Richard. Have you called the police station yet?

MR. BLAIR. [*at R end of davenport*] Now, Sylvia, they'll call us if they have any news.

MRS. BLAIR. [*crossing to L end of davenport; DONALD stands behind it*] I worried about those children all night; I couldn't close my eyes.

MR. BLAIR. You'd better come out in the kitchen and get yourself a cup of hot coffee; it'll cheer you up.

GRANDMA. A shot of my grape wine would do her more good.

MRS. BLAIR. [*picking up paper*] Richard Blair, have you seen this paper?

MR. BLAIR. Only the morning stock reports. Why?

MRS. BLAIR. Why, oh, why, couldn't you have kept this horrid story out of your own paper?

GRANDMA. What's it say?

MRS. BLAIR. [*reading*] HIGH SCHOOL SWEETHEARTS ELOPE WITH SOUL FREEDOM INTENT. Oh, what a dreadful headline!

MR. BLAIR. Why, it's terrible! They featured the wrong idea. It should have been "Soul Freedom Leads Youth Astray." Now, that would have been sensational!

MRS. BLAIR. Richard Blair, how can you? We'll be disgraced! Couldn't you have kept them from printing this?

MR. BLAIR. [*dramatically*] A newspaper must go on, Sylvia, in spite of the editor's own personal heartaches.

GRANDMA. Baloney! [*MR. BLAIR goes over and turns on radio*].

RADIO. Take the juice of one lemon, one quart of pineapple juice, one-half box of raisins —

MR. BLAIR. [*turning to other station*] Oh, bosh, recipes!

GRANDMA. Sounds like a receipt for bad hash to me.

MRS. BLAIR. If you could get the news flashes —

MR. BLAIR. Sh! Sh! I've got 'em, listen!

RADIO. Before the regular morning stock reports we wish to give you the sensational crash — Bennell airplane stock suffered the greatest loss in the history of the stock market when it dropped from ninety down to four.

MR. BLAIR. [*turning, dazed*] Good Lord! That's my airplane stock. It's crashed, busted! Not worth a cent!

MRS. BLAIR. [*dropping on davenport*] Oh, my, trouble upon trouble is all we have!

DONALD. Perhaps it's better that the stock got lost after all, Father.

MR. BLAIR. But if I could have sold it yesterday, we'd have been wealthy today. [*groans*] I've never had such rotten luck!

MRS. BLAIR. [*weeping*] And now we don't even have the \$3000 you paid for it, and Elizabeth's gone and, oh — [*MR. BLAIR comes to davenport and tries to comfort her*].

GRANDMA. [*rising and looking out the window in rear wall*] Wait a minute, wait a minute! Here come the wandering free souls up the walk right now! [*The whole family rushes to the window*].

Convention Go Hang!

MRS. BLAIR. Oh, the darlings! They're back!

MR. BLAIR. Bless their hearts, they look worn out.

DONALD. The kids look scared to death.

RUTH. We mustn't be too hard on the poor dears.

GRANDMA. Nor too easy. [*The family return to their places with stern attitudes. RUTH at R end of davenport; MRS. BLAIR in front of davenport, at L end; DONALD behind davenport C; MR. BLAIR LC; GRANDMA in her chair, down L. BETTY and BUDDY appear at the front door. They are thoroughly bedraggled. BUDDY's trousers are wrinkled, his hair is standing awry. BETTY's dress is wrinkled, her hair ruffled, and her face dirty. They come in very tremblingly, and the family immediately draw up*].

BETTY. [*smiling weakly*] Hel-hello!

MR. BLAIR. [*sternly*] I suppose you at least have an explanation?

MRS. BLAIR. Do you realize that you've disgraced the family? [*BETTY and BUDDY drag slowly down center*].

GRANDMA. I got your note, Betty.

RUTH. Buddy Jenkins, where have you been?

FAMILY. [*in chorus*] Yes, where have you been?

BETTY. [*timidly*] We — we knew you'd be glad to see us. [*MRS. BLAIR looks them over, turns away down R to keep from laughing*].

MR. BLAIR. [*folding arms*] We're waiting!

BUDDY. Well, we haven't been much of any place.

MRS. BLAIR. Where did you spend last night?

BETTY. [*She sinks on davenport. RUTH has moved back of davenport next to DONALD; MRS. BLAIR now stands at R end of davenport*]. On the front porch.

MRS. BLAIR. This is no time for foolishness, Elizabeth! Answer me!

BUDDY. [*sinking wearily beside BETTY*] We did, honestly, Mrs. Blair.

BETTY. I'll tell you all about it.

MR. BLAIR. That's what we've been waiting for.

BETTY. You see, we decided that we'd go away someplace where we could free our souls and not have anybody tell us what we gotta do and not do.

BUDDY. [*proudly*] We're not infants, you know.

BETTY. And we overheard Donald telling Ruth about his soul freedom idea and about convention being all wrong and Donald said —

DONALD. [*interrupting*] That's irrelevant! Go on with your story.

BETTY. So we thought we'd go someplace where our souls would be free and we wouldn't have to wash dishes and practice the piano.

BUDDY. And we got all ready to get on the train and go to Salt Lake City.

RUTH. Salt Lake City?

BUDDY. But we got scared and backed out.

BETTY. And then we were afraid to come home.

BUDDY. So we walked around last evening and went to a movie.

BETTY. And then we came back here, and when we saw that everybody must be in bed, I went to sleep in the porch swing —

BUDDY. And me in the hammock, and I 'bout froze to death. [*He shivers*].

BETTY. Until daylight. Then we heard the milkman coming, so we beat it.

BUDDY. And I caught an awful c-c- [*sneezes*] cold!

BETTY. [*stretching*] I'm so tired and stiff.

MRS. BLAIR. [*softening*] Poor children. [*then sternly*] If you only knew what terrible worrying your father and I went through with!

BETTY. [*penitently*] I'm sorry, Mother.

BUDDY. Oh, Betty, you'd better give your father what we brought him.

BETTY. [*getting up*] That's right. Why, er, Father, you see we didn't have any money to go away on, and just when we were about to give up — why — well, you know that stock of yours —

MR. BLAIR. [*almost yelling, crossing to L end of davenport*] You took my airplane stock? Oh, my Lord!

MRS. BLAIR. Control yourself, Richard!

BETTY. Just when we were wondering what to do, Lew James called up and —

MR. BLAIR. Lew James?

BETTY. Yeah, and he asked me if I knew where that worthless stock he sold you wuz —

MR. BLAIR. [*getting excited*] Worthless stock? He wanted that worthless stock — oh, I'm beginning to see.

BETTY. He said he was sorry about having sold it to you. He said he'd give you your share or something like that.

BUDDY. And he wanted Betty to bring it right down.

MR. BLAIR. Great Scott, you didn't give it to him?

BETTY. So I took it down, and he said he'd give you \$10 a share.

MR. BLAIR. [*rumpling his hair*] I can't stand it. You sold it for \$10 a share when it was worth \$40. [*He paces back and forth in C, almost wildly*].

BETTY. I thought he meant your share, not a share, and I said you'd oughta get \$100 or I wouldn't let him have it. He said some awful thing but finally he said all right, \$100.

MR. BLAIR. \$100 a share! The high point!

BETTY. Well, I didn't know what to do when he handed out all that money, but I just kept still and took it. Here it is. [*She takes a roll of bills from her ankle sock*].

MR. BLAIR. [*grabbing money and counting it*] \$50,000! He gave you \$50,000 for it thinking it was going up, and now it's crashed and not worth a cent! Oh, boy! [*He laughs loudly*].

MRS. BLAIR. Serves the old swindler right! [*Telephone rings*].

MRS. BLAIR. [*crossing to telephone table*] Blair's residence. Just a minute. [*to MR. BLAIR*] It's for you, Richard. [*She comes to C*].

MR. BLAIR. [*answering phone*] Hello. Yes, this is Blair. Oh, it's you, Lew. Well, well, how do you feel today? Ha, ha! You want your money back, eh? It's not legal because the kids sold it to you, huh? It had my signature on it, didn't it? Well, lemme tell you something, Lew James, you bought that stock when you thought that it was gonna keep going up — you tricked those kids into selling it to you, and now because it has flopped you want to get it off your hands! They kinda fooled you, didn't they? Ha, ha! Remember that time you shoved the worthless oil stock off onto me? Well, this time you're the goat! Thanks for the rake-off, Lew! [*hangs up with bang*] Oh, boy, is he tearing his hair!

BETTY. Gee, I'm glad we didn't do anything so awful wrong!

MRS. BLAIR. You precious children! [*She kisses BETTY*].

GRANDMA. Not so dumb, I'd say.

BETTY. Then you're not mad at us any more?

BUDDY. [*wearily*] And kin we have something to eat?

MRS. BLAIR. [*crossing to kitchen door R*] Come right out to the kitchen and I'll make you some nice waffles!

MR. BLAIR. [*stuffs money into his pockets*] And I'm on my way to see if the bank's open. I'm not leaving anything else lying around ever!

MRS. BLAIR. [*calling to him as he reaches front door*] And stop in to look at those new frigidaire on your way home, Richard. [*MR. BLAIR exits out the front door, and MRS. BLAIR with the two children goes into the kitchen*].

GRANDMA. Reckon as how I could take a cat nap, now that the hullabaloo is over. I knowed everything would come out all right. Everything! [*She looks knowingly at RUTH as she exits into her room*].

RUTH. [*not looking at DONALD*] Well, I guess I might as well be going along home. [*She comes around to R end of davenport, picks up her bag, and starts around L end*].

DONALD. [*rushing around the davenport L and blocking her path*] You'd better stay here and have breakfast with us, Ruth.

RUTH. Oh, no! I'll get breakfast over home.

DONALD. I'm sure Mother would like to have you stay here.

RUTH. There's no point in staying around here any longer.

DONALD. I suppose not, but —

RUTH. I won't be over much any more except to see your mother and Grandma.

DONALD. I guess you don't care about seeing anyone else over here?

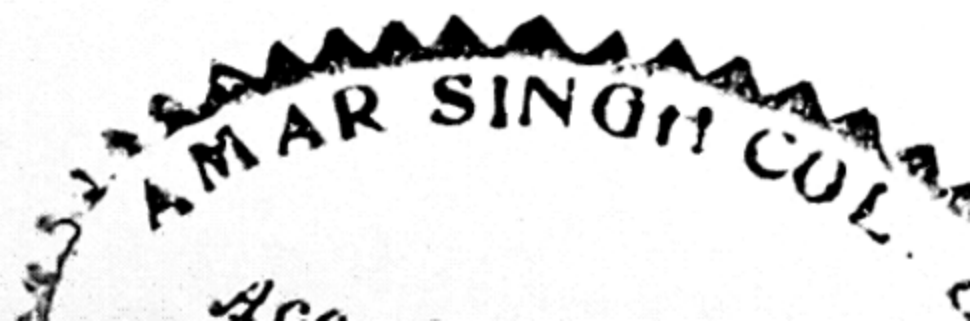
RUTH. No, I guess I don't. [*She pauses*]. Well, good-bye, Donald. [*She starts around the other R end of the davenport*].

DONALD. [*rushing around in back of davenport again blocking her way*] Oh, Ruth —

RUTH. Yes?

DONALD. [*awkwardly*] Ruth, I know I've made a darned fool of myself —

RUTH. Yes?



DONALD. All that rot I started about soul freedom and convention — I must have been crazy — I —

RUTH. Anything else, Donald? [*She turns away L*].

DONALD. [*earnestly, following her to front of davenport*] I didn't know what real love was, but I do now. I tried to think convention was all pretense, but I'd be willing to be bound by convention if it hooked me up with you. I want you to know all this — I — oh, Ruth, I've been such a doggone fool, but, well, I, ah, I love you!

RUTH. [*turns around to him as he moves hopelessly away down R*] Yes, Donald, you did talk a lot of rot, you were pretty blind, and you have been an absolute fool — but — [*turning him around to her*] well, I, I love you!

DONALD. [*taking her in his arms*] You know, I want to write another book. This one is to be on "The Movement for Longer and Stronger Marriages," but I've discovered you can't write books without experience on the subject.

RUTH. Donald, I want to be co-author, and we'll make it a lifetime job. [*He kisses her and is still holding her in his arms as MRS. BLAIR comes in from the kitchen. When she sees them her face lights up with pleasure. GRANDMA has overheard the last part of their conversation from the door of her room*].

DONALD. [*happily*] Do you suppose the minister around the corner is up yet?

MRS. BLAIR. [*coming in*] Oh, no, you're not going to any minister around the corner. You're going to have a nice home wedding with a veil and flowers like I always planned. And now you two get yourselves in the kitchen and eat these waffles before they get cold! [*They start to the kitchen as GRANDMA comes hobbling out of her room*].

GRANDMA. Wait a minute, wait a minute! Here's your first weddin' present. I allus said I'd get this quilt done in time. [*She gives quilt to RUTH*].

[DONALD offers RUTH his arm. They walk slowly toward the kitchen as the strains of Lohengrin's Wedding March come in over the radio].

THE END

Suggestions to Producers

THE SETTING FOR THIS SHORTENED VERSION of Shakespeare's comedy, *As You Like It*, includes two scenes — one representing the lawn before Duke Frederick's palace, the other representing the rustic forest of Arden. The setting in the main remains the same throughout the play, the change of small pieces between some scenes denoting the change of place.

For the cyclorama setting, the effect of the lawn and forest is given by tree trunks, which can be produced with "legs" or folds of curtain draped in cylindrical shape from a batten.

The cardboard scenery is especially effective for *As You Like It*. With the cyclorama or a foliage-painted backdrop as a background, cut-out wings and borders representing branches with pendulous leaves can be made. Tree trunks cut from cardboard and painted can be braced to the floor. Bushes can be cut out of cardboard, painted, and placed about the stage. A groundrow representing bushes and green foliage can be cut out of cardboard, painted, and set in front of the backdrop.

If you are fortunate enough to possess an exterior set, your problems for the setting will be few. Trees are needed only at the back of the stage, and at the right, left, and center (one each place).

Any of the settings for this play require only two openings, one down right and one down left.

If possible a green groundcloth should be used throughout the play. Artificial grass, or heavy paper painted green, fringed to represent grass, should be tacked around the base of the trees.

For scenes taking place on the lawn of Duke Frederick's palace, an effect at the magnificence of a formal garden should be attempted. A balustrade, representing a short marble-

columned railing, should lead off left to the Duke's palace. This balustrade can be constructed of cardboard, cut out to represent columns, and painted to give marble or stone effect. A marble garden bench, very ornate, centers the stage for the palace scenes. If a bench of this type cannot be obtained, it can be built of wood and painted and decorated to give the desired effect. A vine-covered trellis on the right balances the stage. This corner of trellis encloses a stone sundial. The sundial also can be built of cardboard or a light wood and painted to represent stone.

For the Forest of Arden scenes, the trees and background remain the same. The trellis, sundial, marble bench, and balustrade have been removed and replaced by a tree stump down left and a rude, rustic bench at center. The tree stump can be made by covering or painting a small, round keg or tub. Brown paper is an effective covering and gives a realistic effect when painted dark brown or green. Small limbs nailed together to form a bench make an effective seat. Large leaves cut from brown paper and painted may be strewn about the stage to heighten the exterior atmosphere.

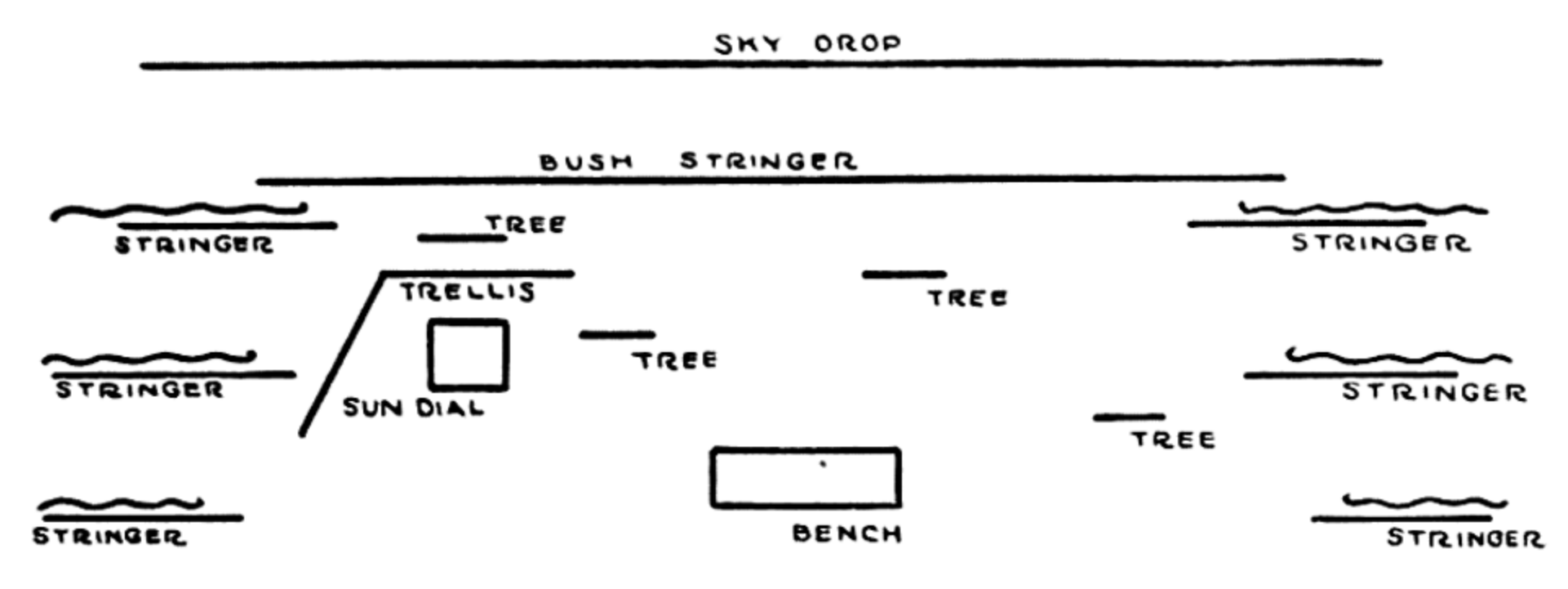
This version of *As You Like It*, as does the original, calls for an unmentioned number of lords attending Duke Frederick and Duke Senior. We have placed this number at three. If the director wishes, he may increase the number of attendants by several more lords and pages, but he must remember to group them carefully to keep the even balance of the stage and maintain the good position of the other players in the scenes when the "extras" are on.

If off-stage music can be arranged, a flourish for the entrances of the duke, that is, a blare of trumpets and roll of drums, and for the opening of the play, a sound of trumpets, can be used. This will be very effective if timed well.

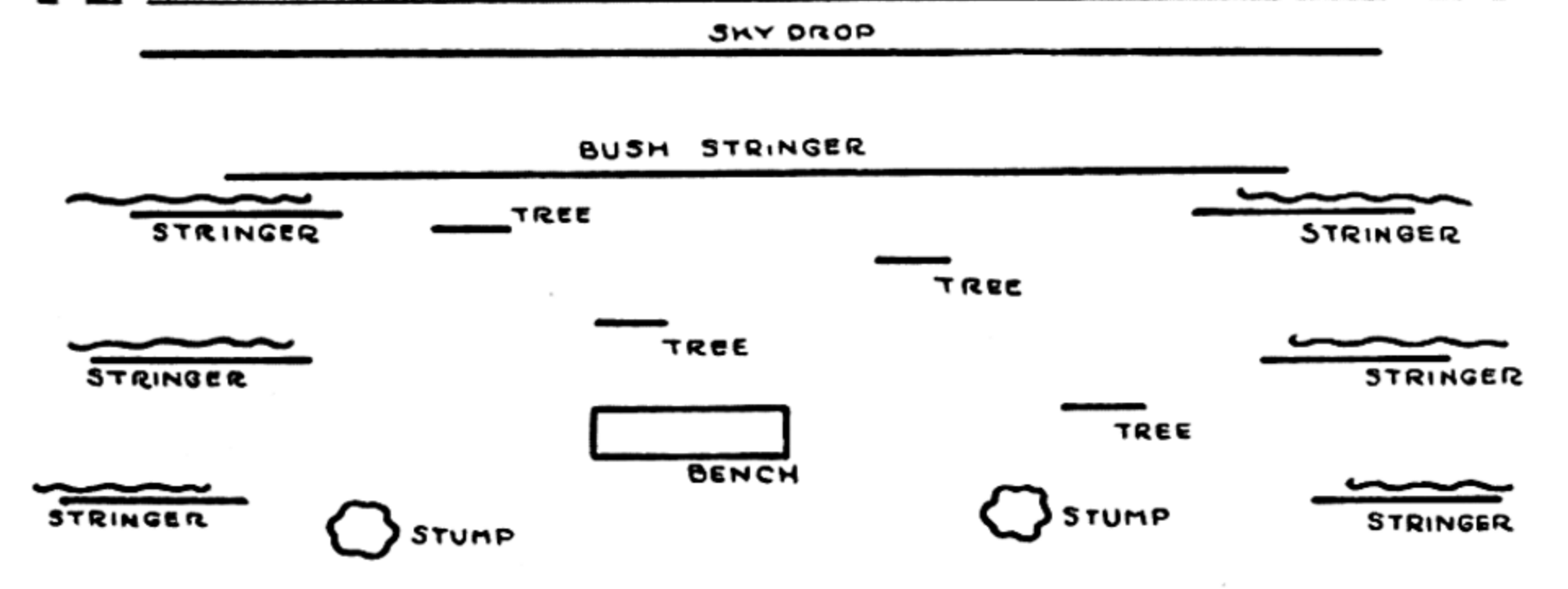
LIGHTING

The lighting for *As You Like It* can be made comparatively simple but still effective.

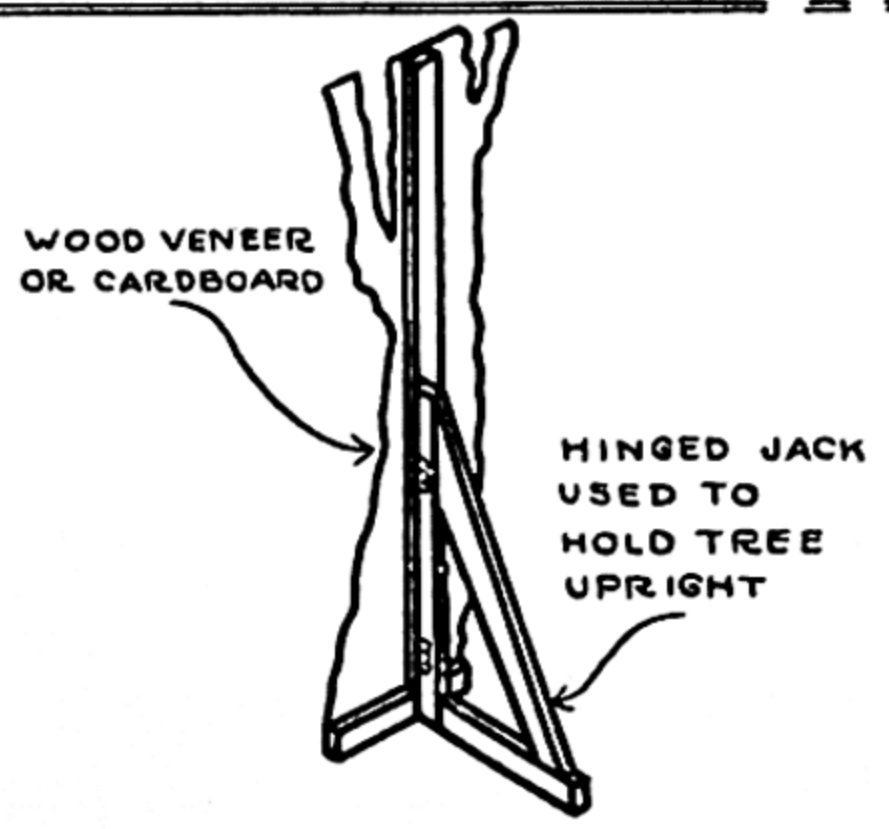
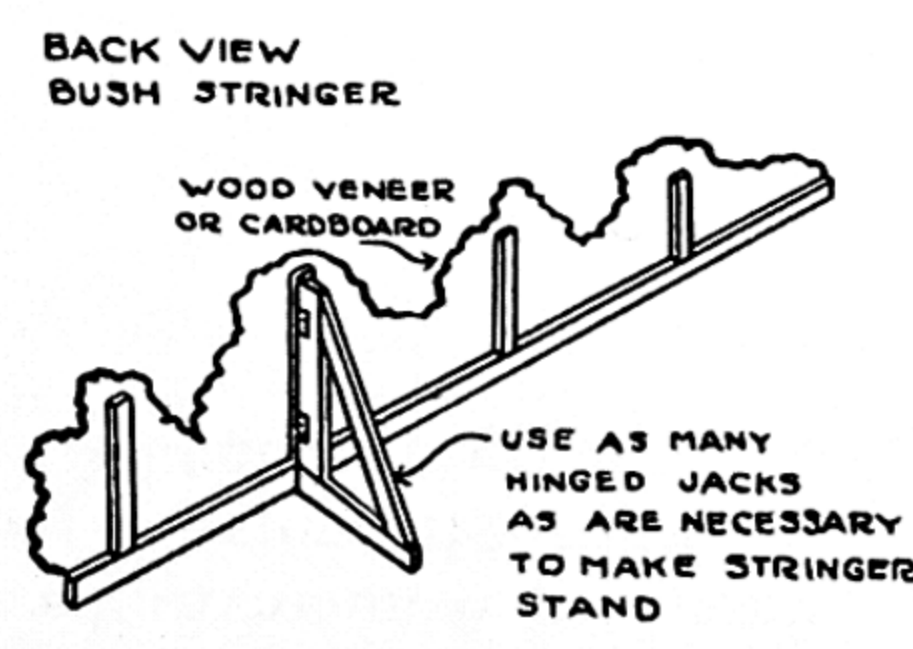
General illumination for both scenes can be obtained by border lights and very dim footlights. Spotlights should be



LAWN BEFORE DUKE'S PALACE



FOREST OF ARDEN



AS YOU LIKE IT



focused to light the acting areas about the bench, in both scenes, the stump in the forest scenes, the fight area in the scene between Orlando and Charles, and the duke's chair, which will be in the same position as the tree stump.

In general, three spotlighted areas, down right, down left, and center, will, with your general illumination, provide effective lighting for the action of the play.

PROPERTIES

Marble garden bench

Balustrade or railing of pillars with marble effect

Stone sundial (can be made of cardboard)

Vine-covered trellis

Tree stump and rustic bench

Fool's bauble for Touchstone

Gold chain for Rosalind

Lightweight stick for Duke Frederick

Heavy, ornate chair for Duke Frederick

Lantern for Adam

Purse of coins for Adam

Bowls of fruit for lords in forest

Rude table for Duke Senior

Purse on belt for Rosalind and Celia

Shepherd's crooks or staffs for Silvius, Corin, Phebe, and Audrey

Papers with verses for Orlando

Letter for Silvius

Stained handkerchief (red ink or crayon) for Oliver

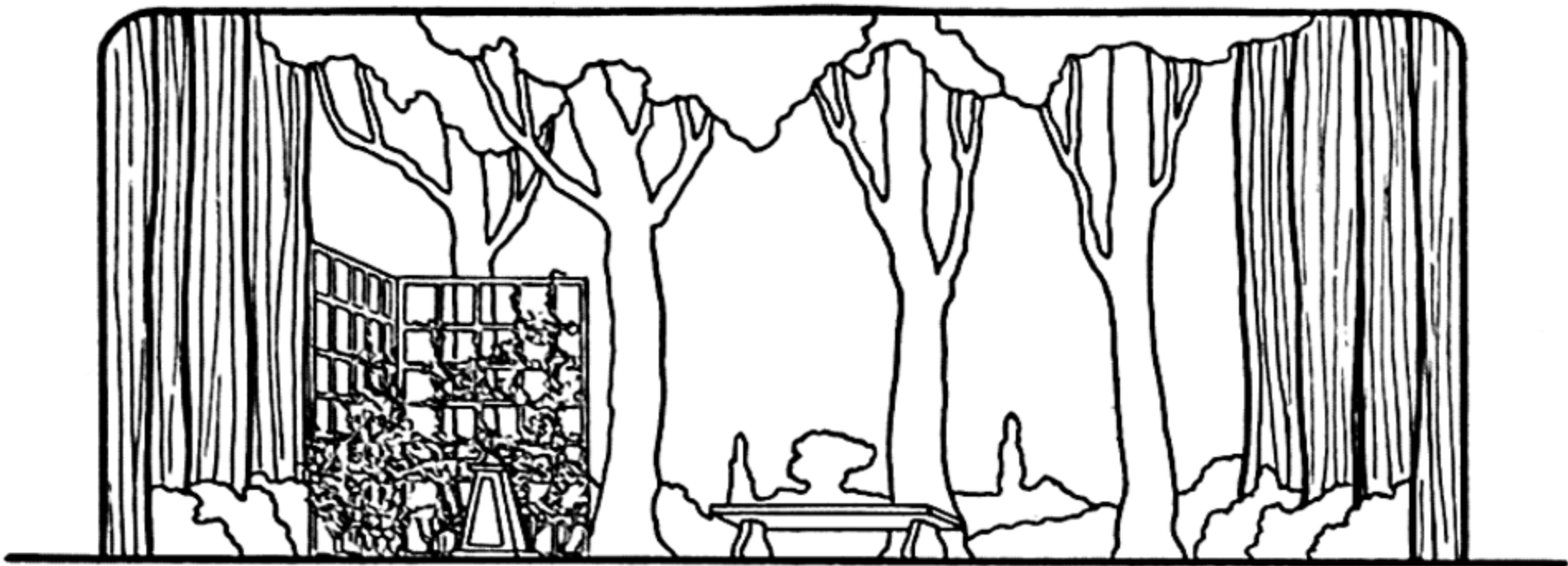
Swords for Orlando and lords

Mandolin for Amiens

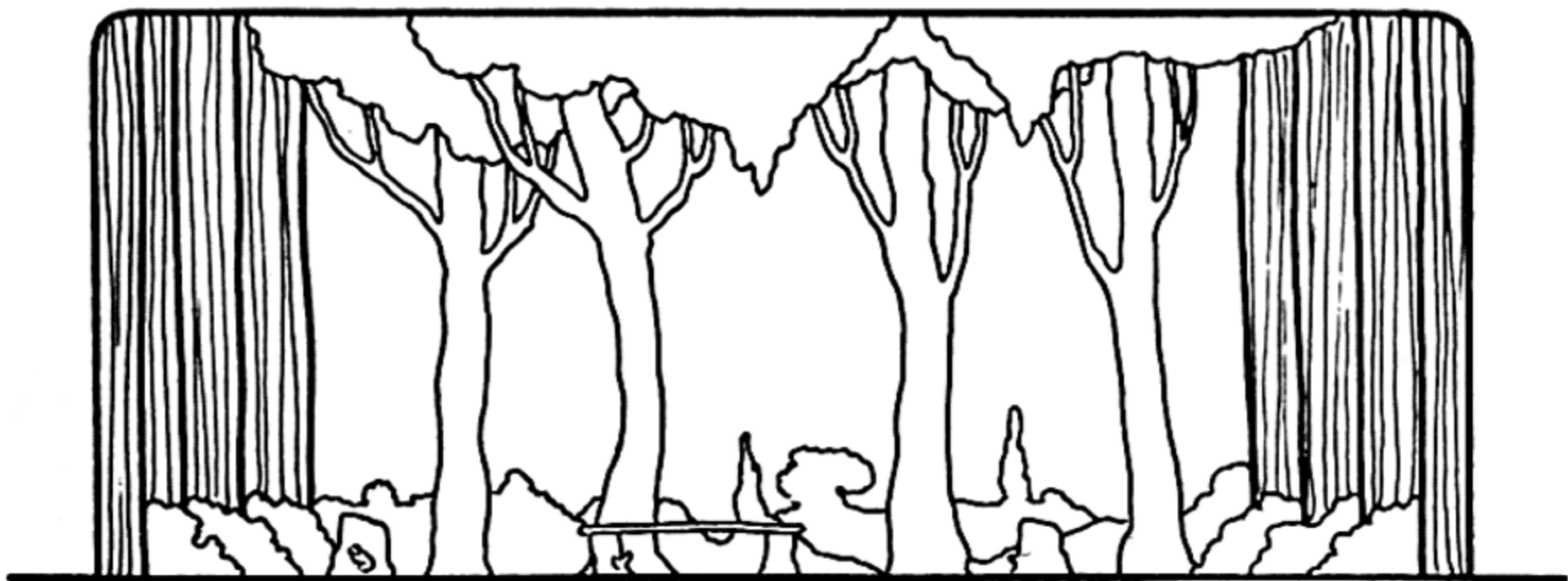
COSTUMES

The costumes for *As You Like It* are of the Elizabethan period. The general characteristics are fitted waist garments for both sexes, mantles or capes for both men and women, tights or doublets, long hose, trunk hose or breeches, plumed hats for men, and soft shoes and ruffs for both sexes, and a profusion of ornamentation on garments and in accessories.

Naturally any Shakespearean or period play can be costumed more effectively if authentic period costumes are rented from a reliable costume company.



LAWN BEFORE DUKE'S PALACE



FOREST OF ARDEN

SUNDIAL



THIS PIECE MAY
BE OF SOLID
CONSTRUCTION
AS SHOWN OR
MADE IN PROFILE
OF VENEER OR
CARDBOARD AND
SUPPORTED BY
A JACK

CLOTH DRAPED
AND PAINTED

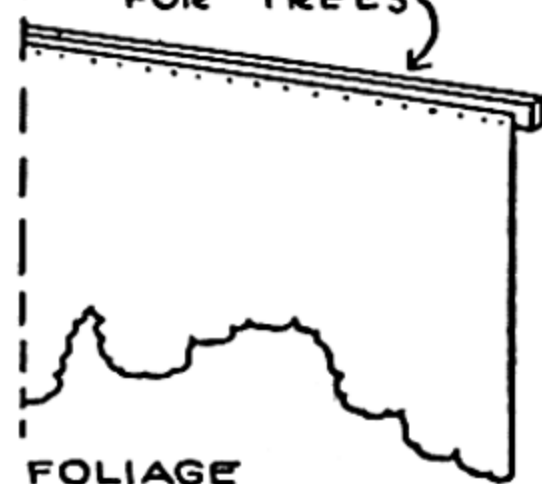
CUT
PLANKING



SMALL
BARREL
OR STOOL

STUMP
CUT PLANKING

PAINTED CLOTH HUNG
ON BATTENS IN LOFT
TO FORM FOLIAGE
FOR TREES



FOLIAGE
BORDER

AS YOU LIKE IT



Let us suppose that you have very little or no funds for costuming. Then we must make the costumes, either from old ones, from old garments, or from new, inexpensive materials. Study drawings of the costumes of the characters for *As You Like It*. Then collect all the old garments, old costumes, remnants and ornaments available, and see what you can do about purchasing inexpensive materials.

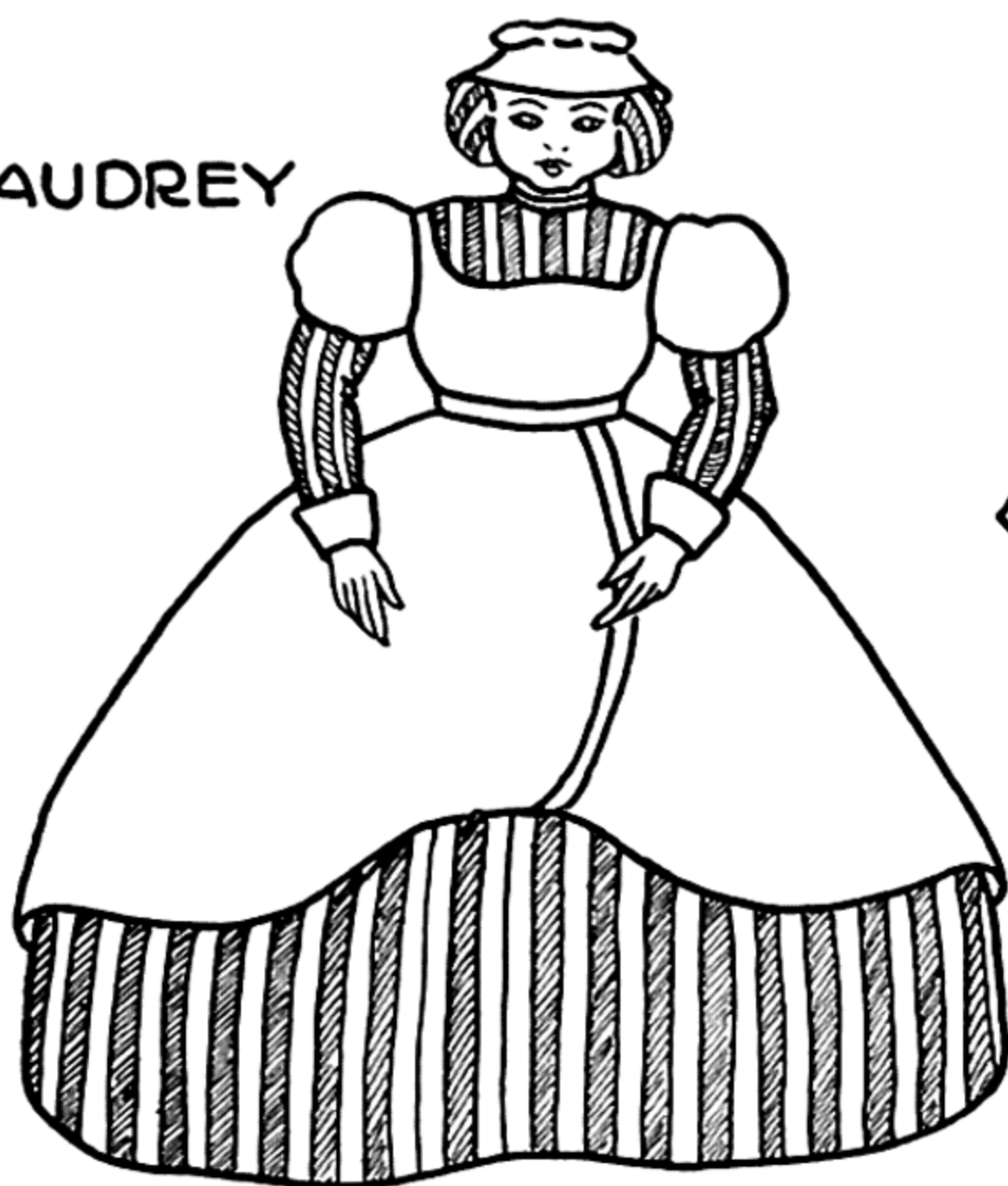
Remember that they must be accurate in design. Watch carefully the colors, materials, cut, and decoration.

Rosalind. Court dress: A tight-fitting bodiced and full-skirted dress of heavy material (velour, sateen, heavy unbleached muslin, painted or imitation brocade). The sleeves should be long, and may be shoulder- or elbow-puffed. The bodice should be pointed in front, and may be belted by a narrow cord or girdle which drops from the peak of the bodice to the hemline of the full skirt. (The girdle may be a narrow band of material like the dress, or a colored cord or painted chain.) A wide border should set off the square neck of the gown. This may be done by painting a border on the neck of the dress, by sewing on contrasting material or a border of cotton batting dotted with spots of paint to represent fur. The border may be repeated at the hem of the gown or at the wrist line of the sleeves.

A variation for Rosalind's costume may be obtained by an overdress of heavy material which is opened down the front. The overdress has a wide V-opening from waistline to hem in front to reveal the underdress, which may be of some bright contrasting material. The sleeves of the overdress should be loose and come barely below the elbow, thus revealing the long tight sleeves of the underdress. (Old, full-skirted evening dresses augmented by the addition of sateen or some other cheap, bright material, may be used to fashion this overdress and underdress effect.) Any sort of wire may be used in the skirt to give it the full, stand-out effect.

Rosalind wears a long gold chain (five-and-ten-cent store jewelry, gilded copper wire, sealing wax, or gilded macaroni will make the chain). Her headdress is a small, close-fitting cap confining the back of the hair. The cap may be made of soft material, beaded, or of a small wire frame covered with

AUDREY



ORLANDO



AS YOU LIKE IT

ADAM



ROSALIND



COSTUMES

6

net and ribbon. Shoes are practically hidden by the long skirt, but low-heeled slippers of any sort, perhaps with rosettes of ribbon or crepe paper fastened to them, may be worn.

Celia. Court costume: Celia wears the same type dress as Rosalind — a tight-fitted bodice and long, full-skirt dress (same sort of materials as described for Rosalind's gown. Old curtains or draperies dyed can be fashioned into an attractive gown for Celia).

Celia's gown should have a high, stand-up collar at the back of the dress. (The collar can be made of buckram, cardboard, or stiffened material, white or colored.) The bodice of the dress should have a V-neck. The sleeves may be puffed and may be padded at the shoulder with paper or cotton. A girdle may be worn with the dress. The girdle may be a narrow band of material, a colored cord, or a painted chain, and a small mirror (compact or purse mirror) may hang from the end. Celia's headdress may be a small, fitted cap, or a head-dress of wire frame covered with beads and ribbon. She may wear a small, starched cap of white muslin from which a veil (netting, cheesecloth, or lace curtain) hangs down in back below the waistline.

Rosalind. Forest costume: A knee-length, pleated skirt of coarse material (denim, canvas, or old serge) is worn by Rosalind in the forest scenes. With the skirt she wears a ballet shirt, or a blouse of soft material with long, full sleeves and a high neck, with perhaps a small, rolled collar. Over the blouse and skirt she wears a short leather jerkin or tunic which is sleeveless. The jerkin is slit from the waist up to the neck in front and laced loosely. The jerkin may be made of burlap, brown oilcloth, felt, or dyed unbleached muslin or canvas to represent leather. The laces may be made of the same material, or old brown shoestrings may be used. A studded belt which goes twice around the waist, once tightly, once loosely, is worn over the jerkin. (An old leather belt, imitation leather, or brown oilcloth may be used for the belt and pouch.) On the left side, under the belt, is thrust a short sword or dagger (may be fashioned from wood), and from the right side of the belt hangs a leather pouch. (Corduroy is another material which might be used to make parts of Rosalind's forest costume.) Her hat

is a small, soft hat with a rolled brim and a small feather. (The hat may be made from an old one, or from pieces of felt, painted buckram, or oilcloth.) Rosalind wears long hose (cotton stockings) which are cross gartered, that is, laced back and forth about the leg up to the knee. The lacings may be made to represent leather thongs by cutting them from oilcloth or felt. With the cross-gartered hose, Rosalind would wear a soft, low shoe (an old bedroom slipper, or a shoe inner sole with a top piece of felt or burlap sewed on, or merely an old stocking rolled down with a cardboard inner sole for the sole). Instead of the hose and cross gartering, Rosalind may wear roughly shaped, knee-length boots fashioned of oilcloth or pieces of felt. If the legs are shapely, omit the gartering or boots.

Celia. Forest dress: A simple, plain dress with fitted waist and flowing skirt and sleeves would be worn by Celia in the forest. (The dress might be adapted from an old gown, or made from a simple, cheap material, such as muslin, cambric, cotton flannel, or old drapery, dyed.) A simple rope girdle may be tied around the waist. Over the dress Celia may wear a long cloak with a hood attached. The cape and hood may be tied at the throat. The cloak and hood may be fashioned easily from a large piece of old material, or from new but inexpensive material of a plain, dull color.

Orlando. The characteristic Elizabethan doublet, that is, a fitted waist garment which may vary in length, is worn by Orlando. It should be of a rich-looking material (sateen, duvetyne, or flannel). The doublet may be sleeveless and reveal a long-sleeved blouse worn underneath, or the doublet may have long sleeves which are laced in at the shoulder with contrasting colored cords. If the doublet has a short-skirt effect, extra long cotton stockings, or tights, must be worn. If the doublet is only waist-length, with perhaps a short ruffle below the waistline, Orlando may wear breeches, or trunk hose, that is, short, puffed bloomers made pumpkin shaped. These may be of any length from hip to mid-thigh. They can be made of material like the doublet but in contrasting color. Often the puffed pants were slashed to show an underlining of white padding, of contrasting material, or material and color matching the doublet.

The doublet may be slit down the length of the sleeves and down the front of the waist to reveal a white or pale-colored undergarment (any simple blouse with long sleeves will do), and a soft, folding collar turns out over the neck of the doublet.

Orlando wears a cape or mantle, knee-length or shorter. (This can be made of sateen or heavy, bright-colored cotton material and may be lined with a contrasting color. Old drapery is again useful in fashioning a cape.) Orlando's shoes are of the soft, pointed type, made by putting an inner sole of cardboard into a rolled-down stocking. He may wear old, low bedroom slippers, or low shoes fashioned from pieces of felt or oilcloth.

Orlando may or may not wear or carry a hat. If he has a hat, it should be a broad-brimmed soft one with a fluffy plume. The hat may be made of buckram which can be painted, of painted cardboard, of felt, or of any cheap material which has enough body to hold a shape. Plumes can be made by shredding bright-colored paper, or by fastening serpentine thickly to a quill or wire. An old, bright-colored beret, with a feather sewed to the side, worn at the right angle will make an effective hat for Orlando.

Touchstone. A jester's suit of any cotton material, checked or striped in bright contrasting colors, makes a costume for Touchstone. The suit may consist of tights (long underwear dyed in bright color or painted in spots or squares) and a waist garment, fitted, with a short skirt. The waist garment should have long tight sleeves, and the short skirt may be a row of pointed tabs edged with bells, or narrow strips of material with bells on the end. The waist may have a deep collar or pointed tabs or strips, like the skirt, with bells attached.

Touchstone's hood is close-fitting around the head and face and fastens under the chin like a helmet. (An old stocking, brightly dyed, may make the hood.) Donkey ears, fashioned of stiff material, may be sewed to the hood, and a slit cut in the top of the hood through which a shock of hair protrudes. He carries a bauble stick, that is, a painted, short stick to which a doll's head and bells are attached. He should have a pouch of material, like his suit, fastened to his belt. His shoes can be made of a rolled-down stocking with cardboard inner sole,

stuffed to an exaggerated point at the toe where bells are fastened.

Duke Frederick. The costume for Duke Frederick should be the most elaborate of the characters. The richest-looking of cheaper materials should be used in fashioning his costume. Old satin evening gowns or remnants of expensive materials may be utilized to good advantage. The duke wears a rich-looking doublet slightly longer than waist-length. (This can be made of bright sateen, imitation brocade, or velour.) The shoulders are puffed or padded, and the sleeves are long and ornamented with paint or beads. He wears full breeches, mid-thigh length, or almost knee-length puffed pants. These are also of sateen or velour. He wears long cotton hose, dyed a bright color, and a fancy ribbon garter with a rosette, crepe paper or ribbon, is worn on one leg, above the knee. His shoes are fashioned much like Orlando's, except that bright pieces of old satin may be sewed to a cardboard inner sole and large ribbon rosettes added for decoration. The duke wears fancy gauntlet gloves, made by adding wide, bright-colored cuffs to old gloves.

About his neck the duke has a large, full ruff, made of buckram and painted in various colors. His cape is of bright sateen, lined with contrasting color. His hat is a narrow-brimmed, tall, tapering-crown effect with big plume. The hat can be made of cardboard or buckram and painted in vivid colors. He also wears a pouch (of imitation leather, beaded or painted) and a long sword (made of wood).

Adam. A coarse tunic garment (any old dark cotton garment with long, full sleeves, or one made of old drapery, burlap, or cotton flannel) is worn by Adam. The garment should extend below the knees and be fastened at the waist with an old rope cord. The sleeves are long and loose. Old dark, loosely fitting cotton stockings complete the outfit. These should be laced back and forth about the leg to the knee with dark strings (old shoestrings or strips of material). Adam wears a soft, flat shoe (old bedroom slipper, or one made of felt or burlap) and carries a wooden staff.

Banished Duke. The banished duke's costume should be one which might have been rich-looking once. He wears an almost

knee-length, belted tunic of heavy cotton material in a dark color, perhaps forest green. The tunic may have a white, falling collar, or a white blouse with a small collar may be worn underneath the tunic. A loose, full-sleeved, knee-length coat is worn over the tunic. (Perhaps an old, straight-cut, wool coat could be cut off to knee-length to make this surcoat.) Dull sateen or corduroy makes a heavy-looking material for the coat. A fur collar and fur trimming for the coat may be made by using bits of cast-off fur, by using imitation fur, or by using cotton batting painted to represent fur.

The banished duke wears long hose (cotton stockings, dyed or left plain-colored) and knee-length, rough boots. (The boots can be made by fitting brown oilcloth, burlap, or felt to the leg, leaving a turned down cuff at the top.) The banished duke may wear or carry a broad, slouch hat, with wide, floppy brim and crushed crown (made from an old hat, or from oilcloth or buckram and burlap).

The lords attending Duke Frederick may be costumed much like the duke, but less elaborately. Their costumes may vary in cut and color of material, some with trunks, others with breeches and doublets, capes or surcoats, and all wearing broad-brimmed hats with plumes or quills, and wearing belts, pouches, swords, or daggers. Variation may be obtained also in the ruffs, falling collars, and in the shoes, boots, and accessories.

Remember to utilize all old garments, draperies, and remnants, and augment with new, inexpensive materials.

The lords attending the banished duke are attired much like the duke. Coats and doublets may be made of dark, rough material. Some wear tights, some breeches, and some trunk hose. All wear woolen hose and rough boots, and have swords or daggers, leather belts and pouches. As foresters, they would not wear ruffs, lined capes, or plumed hats.

Berets again may come in handy in modeling hats for attendants to both dukes.

Audrey. Audrey wears a dull-colored dress of cotton material, fashioned with very full, long skirt and tight waist. She may wear a little white apron and cap, or a short overdress of plain material over a striped or figured, full, underdress.

Phebe. Phebe's costume is fashioned much like Audrey's but

of a brighter color and perhaps with a little trimming around bottom of skirt and neck.

Silvius. A simple cotton tunic, belted with a rope, and long hose, with perhaps a soft, leather hat, comprises Silvius's costume. He probably carries a shepherd's crook.

Corin. A goatskin tunic over a short skirt is the basis of the costume for a shepherd character. He wears long hose, wrapped about with leather thongs, and carries a shepherd's crook.

Jacques. Somber colors to denote his melancholy nature are suitable for Jacques's costume, which is fashioned much like those of the other forest lords.

Oliver. For his scenes with the Duke Frederick, Oliver must have a rich costume. For the forest scenes, he wears a simple doublet costume, much like Orlando's.

Jacques de Boys. His costume must be rich, like those of the lords of court.

Charles. This costume calls for tights to waistline, black or dark color, short doublet or none at all, with upper part of body bare.

MAKE-UP

Duke Frederick. A formal, well-groomed make-up. Middle-age foundation on face, neck, ears, etc. There should be a few fine wrinkle lines around the eyes and mouth. The frown lines between the eyes and the lines from the corners of the mouth should be straight to give a forbidding aspect. The eyebrows should be arched thickly in a definite curve. Block out the lips, if full, and paint in thin, straight lips. Apply crepe hair or natural hair to chin and trim in sharp goatee shape. Apply narrow, curling mustache to upper lip. Powder over all. The hair should be sleek, molded with vaseline to give an effect of a widow's peak on the forehead. Earrings will add to Duke Frederick's make-up.

Rosalind. Straight juvenile foundation paint. Harmonizing rouge and lipstick. Blue shadow on upper eyelids. Eyes outlined in black or brown and enlarged if the eyes are small. Accentuate the brows with black or brown. Powder over all. If

hair is long, it may be dressed to fall about the shoulders. A page-boy bob would be appropriate for Rosalind.

Celia. Same make-up as for Rosalind. Celia should be of contrasting coloring to Rosalind for the best effect.

Orlando. Straight juvenile foundation (almost a suntan) on all parts of the face and body exposed. Very slight touch of rouge and lipstick. Eyelashes and brows accented slightly.

Oliver. Same as make-up for Orlando except that Oliver probably would have a few fine wrinkles about the eyes, a deepened frown line, and no rouge or lipstick.

Touchstone. Bizarre make-up. A dark foundation, a red nose, patches of red on cheeks, and exaggerated lips may be used. Another suggestion for Touchstone is a clown-white foundation, gaudy circles of red on cheeks, diagonals or triangles of gaudy color over and under eyes, and elevated, arched eyebrows.

Duke Senior. Ruddy foundation grease paint. Wrinkle lines on forehead, between and around eyes, and around mouth. Very slight touch of rouge and lipstick to give healthy, outdoor look. Dark powder over all. Eyebrows should be very shaggy (apply crepe or natural hair). Hair should be shaggy and unkempt, perhaps grayed at temples. Chin beard should also look unkempt.

Adam. Sallow old-age foundation on face, neck, arms, and hands. Deep shadows for hollows in cheeks, under eyes, and on temples. Deep and numerous wrinkles in forehead, around and between eyes, around nose, mouth, chin, and neck (parts not covered by beard). Block out lips with foundation, and draw in fine pucker lines through both lips. Sallow powder over all. Hair, eyebrows, and beard should seem long and shaggy. A white wig for Adam would be best. (A wig might be made from the close-fitting lining of an old hat or a stocking top covered with crepe hair or false hair such as is bought at the ten-cent store.) Do not forget wrinkles and hollows and vein lines in hands and arms.

Phebe. The script mentions a black-haired, pink-cheeked, inky-browed Phebe. If the person is naturally dark, use straight juvenile make-up, accentuating the eyes, brows, cheeks, and lips.



ORLANDO



ROSALIND

AS YOU
LIKE IT



DUKE
FREDERICK



ADAM



CELIA

TOUCHSTONE

MAKEUP



AUDREY



Audrey. A very ruddy foundation (you may have to mix it) on face, neck, arms, and hands, to give Audrey a coarsened, country-girl look. Cheeks should be apple red, and lips painted large and full. Try for a pug-nosed Audrey, touching up the end of the nose with red. Dark powder over all.

Silvius. Ruddy foundation on all parts of body exposed. Almost a straight juvenile make-up. Dark powder. Shaggy, unkempt hair.

Corin. Robust old-age foundation on face, neck, arms, and hands. Draw numerous wrinkle lines in forehead, around and between eyes, around nose, around mouth and through lips, and on chin.

Jacques. Middle-age foundation (slightly sallow). Wrinkle lines on forehead, deep frown line, and straight, tapering-down lines around eyes, nose, and mouth to give melancholy effect. Block out lips and draw in thin ones, curving slightly down at the corners. Shadow the eyes, above and below. Powder over all.

Charles. Very robust and ruddy foundation on all parts of body exposed. Dark, shaggy brows. Dark powder over all.

Amiens. Middle-age foundation. Few wrinkle lines. Straight make-up otherwise.

Lords. Same as for Amiens. Vary the make-up for the lords by the shape of beards, hairdress, and number of wrinkle lines. All should have varying number of wrinkle lines to suggest stages of middle age.

As You Like It

CHARACTERS

Orlando. An earnest, modest, handsome young man.

Rosalind. A lovely, vivacious, but serious-minded girl.

Celia. A tender, loving girl, more quiet than Rosalind but with a like sense of humor.

Duke Frederick. A powerful and successful man, not so much a villain, but more an impulsive character swept away by love of pomp and glory.

Adam. An aged, decrepit but devoted servant.

Touchstone. A merry clown, a bit conceited, but faithful, and full of wise sayings as well as foolish ones.

Duke Senior. A gentle but magnetic man whose kind heart wins the respect and admiration of all.

Oliver. Outwardly a hardhearted, cruel brother to Orlando, but inwardly a man with a better nature than he appears to have.

Corin. An old shepherd, kind and helpful.

Silvius. A not too intelligent shepherd, so enthralled with love that he often seems to lack common sense.

Phebe. A proud, disdainful shepherdess who feels herself superior to her fellow foresters.

Audrey. A good-natured, ignorant country wench, prone to giggle and simper on all occasions.

Jacques. A melancholy, sour fellow who has a tender heart beneath a gruff exterior.

Charles. A burly, silent fellow, mostly brawn and lacking in brain.

Amiens. A musically inclined courtier, an amiable fellow but quiet.

PART I

- SCENE 1. The lawn of Duke Frederick's palace
SCENE 2. Near Oliver's house (played in front of curtain)
SCENE 3. The Forest of Arden
SCENE 4. Same
SCENE 5. The lawn of Duke Frederick's palace
SCENE 6. The Forest of Arden

PART II

- SCENE 1. The Forest of Arden
SCENE 2. Same
SCENE 3. Same

PART I — SCENE I

The lawn of DUKE FREDERICK's palace. A stone balustrade leads off L to the entrance of the Duke's palace. An ornate marble bench is placed at center, a vine-covered trellis, extreme R, and up, encloses a stone sundial. ROSALIND enters from left, followed by CELIA, from whom she evidently has walked away.

CELIA. [*arms out in pleading gesture*] I pray thee, Rosalind, sweet my coz, be merry.

ROSALIND. [*at C, turning to CELIA*] Dear Celia, I show more mirth than I am mistress of; and would you yet I were merrier? [*She then turns away*]. Unless [*pauses*] you could teach me to forget a banished father, you must not learn me how to remember any extraordinary pleasure.

CELIA. [*walks down left dejectedly*] Herein I see thou lovest me not with the full weight that I love thee. If my uncle, thy banished father, had banished thy uncle, the duke my father, so thou hadst been still with me, I could have taught my love to take thy father for mine.

ROSALIND. [*steps toward CELIA; speaks kindly*] Well, I will forget the condition of my estate, to rejoice in yours.

CELIA. [*facing ROSALIND*] You know my father hath no child but I, nor none is like to have: and, truly, when he dies, thou shalt be his heir, for what he hath taken away from thy father perforce, I will render thee again in affection; by mine honor, I will; and when I break that oath, let me turn monster; therefore, my sweet Rose, my dear Rose, be merry.

ROSALIND. [*smiling*] From henceforth I will, coz, and devise sports. Let me see; [*walks back to bench and sits, faces CELIA*] what think you of falling in love?

CELIA. [*walks back and sits on bench beside ROSALIND*] Marry, I prithee, do, to make sport withal: but love no man in good earnest; nor no further in sport neither than with safety of a pure blush thou mayst in honor come off again.

TOUCHSTONE. [*enters from R, running to right end of bench. To CELIA*] Mistress, you must come away to your father. [*indicates off R*]

CELIA. [*smiling*] Were you made the messenger?

TOUCHSTONE. No, by mine honor, [*strikes chest heroically*] but I was bid to come for you.

ROSALIND. Where learned you that oath, fool?

TOUCHSTONE. [*strikes pose*] Of a certain knight that swore by his honor they were good pancakes and swore by his honor the mustard was naught: [*pretends to hold mustard in one hand and pancakes in the other, gestures with each*] now I'll stand to it, the pancakes were naught and the mustard was good, [*rubs his stomach*] and yet was not the knight forsworn. [*pretends to look wise*]

CELIA. [*laughing*] How prove you that, in the great heap of your knowledge?

ROSALIND. [*almost gaily*] Ay, marry, now unmuzzle your wisdom.

TOUCHSTONE. Stand you both forth now: [*He motions them to stand; they do*] stroke your chins [*strokes his chin as if he had a very long beard*] and swear by your beards that I am a knave.

CELIA. [*strokes her chin in mock seriousness*] By our beards, if we had them, thou art.

TOUCHSTONE. By my knavery, if I had it, then I were; but if you swear by that that is not [*points to her chin*] you are not forsworn: no more was this knight, swearing by his honor, for he never had any; or if he had, he had sworn it away before ever he saw those pancakes or that mustard. [TOUCHSTONE laughs gleefully and turns a somersault as the girls sit, laughing. Flourish of trumpets off stage. Enter DUKE FREDERICK, from L, followed by three lords, or attended by two pages, then ORLANDO, followed by CHARLES. ORLANDO moves across and stands down R alone. CHARLES stands alone up R by sundial. TOUCHSTONE runs to meet the duke and frolics about in front of him as the duke comes over to CELIA and ROSALIND, his lords standing behind him. He motions TOUCHSTONE away].

DUKE F. [*to CELIA and ROSALIND, who rise and bow to him*] How now, daughter and cousin! Are you crept hither to see the wrestling?

ROSALIND. [*steps forward toward the duke*] Ay, my liege, so please you give us leave.

DUKE F. You will take little delight in it, I can tell you;

there is such odds in the man. In pity of the challenger's youth, [*indicates ORLANDO who is standing alone*] I would fain dissuade him, but he will not be entreated. Speak to him, ladies; see if you can move him.

ROSALIND. [*crossing right to ORLANDO*] Young man, have you challenged Charles the Wrestler?

ORLANDO. [*bowing*] No, fair princess; he [*indicates CHARLES who is standing alone upstage at extreme R*] is the general challenger: I come but in, as others do, to try with him the strength of my youth.

CELIA. [*crossing to ROSALIND and ORLANDO*] Young gentleman, your spirits are too bold for your years. We pray you, for your own sake, to embrace your own safety and give over this attempt.

ROSALIND. Do, young sir; your reputation shall not therefore be misprised; we will make it our suit to the duke that the wrestling might not go forward.

ORLANDO. I beseech you, punish me not with your hard thoughts. But let your fair eyes and gentle wishes go with me to my trial: wherein if I be foiled, there is but one shamed that was never gracious; if killed, but one dead that is willing to be so; only in the world I fill up a place, which may be better supplied when I have made it empty.

ROSALIND. The little strength that I have, I would it were with you.

CELIA. And mine, to eke out hers. [*ORLANDO bows, and CELIA and ROSALIND walk back to bench*].

CHARLES. [*stepping forward*] Come, where is this young gallant that is so desirous to lie with his mother earth?

ORLANDO. [*turning to CHARLES*] Ready, sir; but his will hath in it a more modest working.

DUKE F. [*steps forward*] You shall try but one fall. [*Duke steps down L and sits in large, ornate chair, which two lords have brought from off L. The lords and pages group themselves beside and in back of him*].

CHARLES. [*bowing to the duke*] No, I warrant your grace, you shall not entreat him to a second, that have so mightily persuaded him from a first.

ORLANDO. [*who has taken off his cape and thrown it down near*

the bench, turns to CHARLES] An you mean to mock me after, you should not have mocked me before: but come your ways. [*ORLANDO squares away challengingly, then advances to CHARLES*].

ROSALIND. [*calling to ORLANDO*] Now Hercules be thy speed, young man! [*ORLANDO and CHARLES advance toward each other, meet and circle around, then back away from each other, this time ORLANDO to extreme down right, CHARLES to center R*].

CELIA. [*As CHARLES retreats in their direction, she catches ROSALIND's arm and whispers loudly*]. I would I were invisible, to catch the strong fellow by the leg. [*She indicates CHARLES*].

ORLANDO and CHARLES come together, in center of right half of stage and grapple. Others look on.

ROSALIND. [*as the wrestlers grapple*] O excellent young man!

CELIA. If I had a thunderbolt in mine eye, I can tell who should down.

[*CHARLES seems to have the upper hand in the grappling. ROSALIND and CELIA, the duke and his lords, and TOUCHSTONE watch excitedly, exclaiming all the while. The cast should be prepared to ad lib during this scene to keep up the pitch of excitement. Such lines as the following might be used*].

FIRST LORD. Charles will massacre the youth!

SECOND LORD. The youth fights bravely, but is o'ermatched.

TOUCHSTONE. [*hiding his face with his hands, but peeking through his fingers*] I cannot bear to look!

CELIA. [*as ORLANDO seems to be down*] Oh, the gallant youth is down!

ROSALIND. [*rising from the bench and crying out excitedly*] Take strength, excellent young man!

THIRD LORD. [*as ORLANDO seems to gain strength*] Look, Charles is weakening! [*ORLANDO, with a burst of strength, gets the upper hand. CHARLES is thrown. All shout*].

DUKE F. [*rising from his chair holding up his hand*] No more, no more.

ORLANDO. [*getting up, bowing*] Yes, I beseech your grace: I am not yet well breathed. [*He steps back, ready to fight again*].

DUKE F. [*crosses right to prostrate CHARLES, lords following*] How dost thou, Charles?

FIRST LORD. [*kneeling down by CHARLES*] He cannot speak, my lord.

DUKE F. [*motioning off stage right*] Bear him away. [*Two lords and pages assist CHARLES off R. Duke turns to ORLANDO, who has been standing back, center right*].

DUKE F. [*to ORLANDO*] What is thy name, young man?

ORLANDO. [*bowing low*] Orlando, my liege; the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys.

DUKE F. [*frowning*] I would thou hadst been son to some man else: the world esteemed thy father honorable, but I did find him still mine enemy. [*crosses L, in front of ORLANDO, then turns back*] But fare thee well; thou art a gallant youth: I would thou hadst told me of another father. [*DUKE F., followed by third lord, exits L into palace. TOUCHSTONE runs over, takes admiring look at ORLANDO, then runs off L. CELIA and ROSALIND, who have been listening to the conversation of the duke and ORLANDO, now walk down stage, center, from bench*].

ROSALIND. [*to CELIA*] My father loved Sir Rowland as his soul, and all the world was of my father's mind: had I before known this young man his son, I should have given him tears unto entreaties, ere he should thus have ventured.

CELIA. Gentle cousin, let us go thank him and encourage him: my father's rough and envious disposition sticks me at heart. [*CELIA crosses right to ORLANDO, who has been putting on his cape, preparing to go*]. Sir, you have well deserved: if you do keep your promises in love but justly, as you have exceeded all promise, your mistress shall be happy. [*ORLANDO bows*].

ROSALIND. [*follows CELIA over to ORLANDO*] Gentleman, wear this for me, [*gives him chain from her neck*] one out of suits with fortune, that could give more, but that her hand lacks means. [*ORLANDO takes the chain, bows. ROSALIND waits for him to speak, but he says nothing, so she turns to CELIA*]. Shall we go, coz?

CELIA. Ay. Fare you well, fair gentleman. [*CELIA and ROSALIND start walking off, L*].

ORLANDO. [*takes hesitating step after them*] Can I not say, I thank you? [*CELIA and ROSALIND pause, but do not turn back. ORLANDO goes on*]. My better parts are all thrown down, and that which here stands up is but a quintain, a mere lifeless block.

ROSALIND. [*to CELIA*] He calls us back: my pride fell with my fortunes; I'll ask him what he would. [*She turns, takes a step back to ORLANDO*].

ROSALIND. Did you call, sir? [*She waits for an answer. ORLANDO opens his mouth as if to speak, but no words come. Then ROSALIND speaks*]. Sir, you have wrestled well and overthrown more than your enemies.

CELIA. [*impatiently*] Will you go, coz?

ROSALIND. [*to CELIA*] Have with you. [*looks at ORLANDO who still does not speak*] Fare you well. [*ROSALIND and CELIA exit L*].

ORLANDO. [*looking after ROSALIND*] What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue? I cannot speak to her, yet she urged conference. [*He turns and walks right, dejectedly*]. O poor Orlando, thou art overthrown! Or Charles or something weaker masters thee. [*turns and looks off L*] But heavenly Rosalind! [*He looks at chain, then puts it around neck, exits R as ROSALIND re-enters from L. She takes a step as if to detain him, but as he exits she sighs and shakes her head sadly*].

CELIA. [*re-entering from L*] Why, cousin! Why, Rosalind! Cupid have mercy! [*looks off R where ORLANDO exited*] Not a word?

ROSALIND. [*walks over and sits on bench, center, dejectedly*] Not one to throw at a dog.

CELIA. [*crossing toward ROSALIND, inquires archly*] But is all this for your father?

ROSALIND. No, some of it is for my father's child. [*sighs*] O, how full of briers is this working-day world!

CELIA. [*places sympathetic hand on ROSALIND's shoulder*] Come, come, wrestle with thy affections.

ROSALIND. O, they take the part of a better wrestler than myself!

CELIA. [*suddenly realizing*] Is it possible, on such a sudden, you should fall into so strong a liking with old Sir Rowland's youngest son?

ROSALIND. [*quickly*] The duke my father loved his father dearly.

CELIA. Doth it therefore ensue that you should love his son dearly? By this kind of chase, I should hate him, for my father hated his father dearly; yet I hate not Orlando.

ROSALIND. [*looks up quickly*] No, faith, hate him not, for my sake. [*looks off stage L*] Look, here comes the duke.

CELIA. [*looks off L, then says anxiously*] With his eyes full of anger. [DUKE F. *strides in sternly. Lords follow. CELIA and ROSALIND bow low*].

DUKE F. [*to ROSALIND*] Mistress, dispatch you with your safest haste and get you from our court.

ROSALIND. Me, uncle?

DUKE F. [*sternly*] You, cousin; within these ten days if that thou be'st found so near our public court as twenty miles, thou diest for it.

ROSALIND. [*pleadingly*] I do beseech your grace, let me the knowledge of my fault bear with me; if with myself I hold intelligence, never so much as in a thought unborn did I offend your highness. [*She bows*].

DUKE F. Thou art thy father's daughter; there's enough. [*He turns away from her*].

ROSALIND. [*takes step toward him*] So was I when your highness took his dukedom; so was I when your highness banish'd him: treason is not inherited, my lord; [*She walks down R*] or, if we did derive it from our friends, what's that to me? My father was no traitor: [*faces duke*] then, good my liege, mistake me not so much to think my poverty is treacherous.

CELIA. [*steps toward father, beseechingly*] Dear sovereign, hear me speak.

DUKE F. [*turning on her sternly*] Open not thy lips: firm and irrevocable is my doom which I have pass'd upon her; she is banish'd.

CELIA. [*bows her head sadly*] Pronounce that sentence then on me, my liege; I cannot live out of her company.

DUKE F. You are a fool. [*to ROSALIND*] You, niece, provide yourself: if you outstay the time, upon mine honor, and in the greatness of my word, you die. [CELIA *starts to weep as the duke and lords exit L*].

CELIA. [*sobbing*] O my poor Rosalind, whither wilt thou go? I charge thee, be not thou more grieved than I am.

ROSALIND. [*sadly, turning to sit on bench*] I have more cause.

CELIA. Thou hast not, cousin: prithee, be cheerful: [*dries*

her own eyes] Know'st thou not, the duke hath banish'd me, his daughter?

ROSALIND. That he hath not.

CELIA. No, hath not? [*takes a step toward ROSALIND*] Shall we part, sweet girl? No: let my father seek another heir. [*comes close to ROSALIND*] Therefore devise with me how we may fly, whither to go and what to bear with us.

ROSALIND. [*turning to her*] Why, whither shall we go?

CELIA. [*eagerly*] To seek my uncle in the forest of Arden.

ROSALIND. [*walks thoughtfully across stage R*] Alas, what danger will it be to us, maids as we are, to travel forth so far! Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold.

CELIA. [*almost excitedly*] I'll put myself in poor and mean attire [*indicates dress*] and with a kind of umber smirch my face; [*rubs face*] the like do you: so shall we pass along and never stir assailants.

ROSALIND. [*turns to CELIA*] Were it not better, because that I am more than common tall [*indicates height*] that I did suit me all points like a man? A gallant curtle-axe upon my thigh, [*points to thigh*] a boar-spear in my hand; and — in my heart — [*pauses and lays hand on heart*] lie there what hidden woman's fear there will — we'll have a swashing and a martial outside [*strides about with masculine bravado*] as many other mannish cowards have that do outface it with their semblances.

CELIA. [*excitedly*] What shall I call thee when thou art a man?

ROSALIND. [*thinks a second, then*] I'll have no worse a name than Jove's own page; and therefore look you call me — Ganymede. But what will you be call'd?

CELIA. [*sadly*] Something that hath a reference to my state; no longer Celia, but Aliena. [*TOUCHSTONE skips across the stage from L to R whistling a jingling tune*].

ROSALIND. [*sees him, says suddenly*] But, cousin, what if we assay'd to steal the clownish fool out of your father's court? Would he not be a comfort to our travel?

CELIA. He'll go along o'er the wide world with me; leave me alone to woo him. Let's away, and get our jewels and our wealth together, devise the fittest time and safest way to hide us from pursuit that will be made after my flight. Now go we

in content, to liberty and not to banishment. [CELIA and ROSALIND run off R, hand in hand after TOUCHSTONE].

PART I — SCENE 2

Near OLIVER's house. The next scene may be played on a dimly lighted stage, or the front curtains may be closed and the scene be played on the apron of the stage, that is, in front of the curtain. ADAM enters, left, with a lantern. ORLANDO enters from right.

ORLANDO. [*stopping, peering ahead*] Who's there?

ADAM. [*leaning on staff, amazed*] What, my young master? [*hobbles forward a step*] O my gentle master! O my sweet master! O you memory of old Sir Rowland! Why, what make you here? Why would you be so fond to overcome the bonny priser of the humorous duke? Your virtues, gentle master, are sanctified and holy traitors to you.

ORLANDO. [*coming closer*] Why, what's the matter?

ADAM. O unhappy youth! Come not within these doors: [*indicates off stage L*] within this roof the enemy of all your graces lives; your brother — no, no brother; yet the son — yet not the son, I will not call him son of him I was about to call his father — hath heard your praises, and this night he means to burn the lodging where you use to lie and you within it; this house is but a butchery; abhor it, fear it, do not enter it.

ORLANDO. Why, whither, Adam, wouldst thou have me go?

ADAM. [*beseechingly*] No matter whither, so you come not here.

ORLANDO. What, wouldst thou have me go and beg my food, or with a base and boisterous sword [*points to his sword*] enforce a thievish living on the common road? I rather will subject me to the malice of a diverted blood and bloody brother. [*starts determinedly off L*]

ADAM. [*falls on his knees before ORLANDO*] But do not so. I have five hundred crowns, [*indicates pouch at belt*] the thrifty hire I saved under your father. Here is the gold; [*gives pouch to ORLANDO*] all this I give you. Let me be your servant; though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty. [*straightens up*] I'll do the service of a younger man in all your business and necessities.

ORLANDO. [*raises ADAM from his knees*] O good old man, thou prunest a rotten tree that cannot so much as a blossom yield in lieu of all thy pains and husbandry. But come thy ways; [*takes ADAM's arm*] we'll go along together, and ere we have thy youthful wages spent, we'll light upon some settled low content. [*ORLANDO and ADAM exit R*].

Front curtains open, if the scene was played before the curtain. If on a darkened stage, lights come up.

PART I — SCENE 3

The Forest of Arden. The trees and bushes form the setting for the Forest of Arden. A long, rude, rustic bench is placed in the center. Down L is a low tree stump. DUKE SENIOR enters from left, followed by AMIENS, JACQUES, and three lords garbed like foresters. Two of the lords carry a rude wooden table which they place down right C. JACQUES sits on the ground at L of table. One lord stands between him and the center bench. AMIENS sits on the bench C. The other two lords arrange themselves about the duke, who sits on the tree stump. Two lords hold bowls of fruit and food.

DUKE S. Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile, [*smiles around at lords*] hath not old custom made this life more sweet than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods [*gestures with sweeping movement of arm about him*] more free from peril than the envious court? Here feel we but the penalty of Adam, the seasons' difference, as the icy fang and churlish chiding of the winter's wind, which, when it bites and blows upon my body, even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say, "This is no flattery: these are counsellors that feelingly persuade me what I am." Sweet are the uses of adversity, which, like the toad, ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in his head; and this our life exempt from public haunt finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones and good in everything. [*He reaches for a piece of fruit offered him by a lord. ORLANDO rushes in from left, with sword drawn*].

ORLANDO. [*advances toward JACQUES, who has reached up to the table for a piece of fruit which he prepares to eat*] Forbear and eat no more. [*Lords jump forward and protect duke with swords drawn,*

one lord steps between ORLANDO and JACQUES, who is still sitting, and holds ORLANDO off with sword].

JACQUES. Why, I have eat none yet.

ORLANDO. [*menacingly*] Nor shalt not, till necessity be served.

JACQUES. [*to the duke and lords, indicating ORLANDO*] Of what kind should this cock come of?

DUKE S. [*rising, stepping toward ORLANDO*] Art thou thus bolden'd, man, by thy distress, or else a rude despiser of good manners, that in civility thou seem'st so empty?

ORLANDO. [*turning to the duke*] You touch'd my vein at first: the thorny point of bare distress hath ta'en from me the show of smooth civility. [*JACQUES starts to eat, ORLANDO takes a threatening step toward him, brandishing his sword*]. But forbear, I say: he dies that touches any of this fruit till I and my affairs are answered.

JACQUES. [*calmly eating since he knows the third lord stands with drawn sword between him and ORLANDO*] An you will not be answered with reason, I must die.

DUKE S. [*quickly, to divert ORLANDO from JACQUES*] What would you have? Your gentleness shall force more than your force move us to gentleness.

ORLANDO. [*in gentler tone*] I almost die for food; and let me have it.

DUKE S. [*kindly*] Sit down and feed, [*indicates bench, center*] and welcome to our table.

ORLANDO. [*to duke, in surprise*] Speak you so gently? Pardon me, I pray you; I thought that all things had been savage here; [*indicates forest*] and therefore put I on the countenance of stern commandment. If ever you have looked on better days, and know what 'tis to pity and be pitied, let gentleness my strong enforcement be, in the which hope I blush, and hide my sword. [*puts up sword*]

DUKE S. True it is that we have seen better days, [*indicates his followers*] and therefore sit you down in gentleness and take upon command what help we have that to your wanting may be minister'd. [*takes ORLANDO by arm and would lead him to bench C*]

ORLANDO. [*holding back*] Then but forbear your food a little while, whiles, like a doe, I go to find my fawn and give it food.

There is an old poor man, [*points off L*] who after me hath many a weary step limp'd in pure love; till he be first sufficed, oppress'd with two weak evils, age and hunger, I will not touch a bite.

DUKE S. Go find him out, and we will nothing waste till you return.

ORLANDO. [*starting L, then turns*] I thank ye; and be blest for your good comfort! [*He exits L*].

DUKE S. [*returning and sitting on stump L*] Thou seest we are not all alone unhappy. This wide and universal theater presents more woeful pageants than the scene wherein we play in.

JACQUES. [*who has risen from his sitting position on the ground, a piece of fruit in hand with which he gestures as he talks*] All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts. At first the infant, [*walks down center, as if cradling a baby in his arms*] mewling in the nurse's arms. [*drops this pose and goes on*] And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel and shining morning face, creeping like snail unwillingly to school. And then the lover, [*sighs deeply*] sighing like furnace. Then a soldier, [*draws himself up straight, speaks loudly and quickly*] jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel, seeking the bubble reputation even in the cannon's mouth. [*drops this pose and tone as he goes on*] And then the justice, with eyes severe and beard of formal cut. The sixth age shifts into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon, [*stoops as if aged*] with spectacles on nose and pouch on side, and his big manly voice, [*raises his voice to a treble*] turning again toward childish treble. Last scene of all, that ends this strange eventful history, is second childishness and mere oblivion, sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything. [*He shakes his head sadly and returns to table R as duke and lords laugh at his oration. ORLANDO enters L, supporting the stumbling ADAM*].

DUKE S. [*rising*] Welcome. Set down your venerable burden and let him feed.

ORLANDO. I thank you most for him. [*takes ADAM to bench, up C*].

ADAM. [*as if exhausted*] So had you need; I scarce can speak to thank you for myself.

DUKE S. Welcome; fall to: I will not trouble you as yet, to question you about your fortunes. Give us some music; and, [motions to AMIENS] good cousin, sing. [ADAM looks hungrily at the table and the first and second lords bring fruit from the table to him. He takes it in both hands and begins to eat. ORLANDO takes a piece of fruit from the table and, eating it, walks L to DUKE S., who is sitting on the stump. ORLANDO and the duke converse while AMIENS sings. The song may be omitted or may be sung to the accompaniment of an old mandolin or guitar-like instrument].

AMIENS. [singing]

Under the Greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,

Come hither, come hither, come hither:

Here shall he see no enemy
But winter and rough weather.

DUKE S. [speaking as if continuing his conversation with ORLANDO, immediately the song is done] If that you were the good Sir Rowland's son, as you have whispered faithfully you were, be truly welcome hither. I am the duke that loved your father. [rises and crosses to ADAM] Good old man, thou art right welcome as thy master is. Give me your hand and let me all your fortunes understand. [He assists ADAM to rise. ORLANDO crosses to them and all exit down R, ORLANDO, DUKE S. and ADAM, first, followed by AMIENS and JACQUES, then the lords who carry off the table].

PART I — SCENE 4

The Forest. Enter from L ROSALIND, dressed in boy's clothing as Ganymede, CELIA in simple dress as Aliena, and TOUCHSTONE. TOUCHSTONE is carrying CELIA on his back, and sets her down as they pause to rest.

ROSALIND. O Jupiter, how weary are my spirits!

TOUCHSTONE. I care not for my spirits, if my legs were not weary. [He sinks to the ground down L with a great deal of groaning and stiffness].

CELIA. [*also sitting*] I pray you bear with me; I cannot go no further.

TOUCHSTONE. For my part, I had rather bear with you than bear you.

ROSALIND. [*looking about her*] Well, this is the forest of Arden.

TOUCHSTONE. Ay, now am I in Arden; the more fool I; when I was at home I was in a better place: but travelers must be content.

ROSALIND. Ay, be so, good Touchstone. [*Enter from R CORIN and SILVIUS*]. Look you, who comes here; a young man and an old in solemn talk.

CORIN. [*sitting on ground, down R*] That is the way to make her scorn you still.

SILVIUS. O Corin, that thou knew'st how I do love her!

CORIN. I partly guess; for I have loved ere now.

SILVIUS. No, Corin, being old, thou canst not guess, though in thy youth thou wast as true a lover as ever sigh'd upon a midnight pillow. If thou remember'st not the slightest folly that ever love did make thee run into, thou hast not loved; if thou hast not sat as I do now, wearying thy hearer in thy mistress' praise, thou hast not loved. [*shaking his head and crying in despair*] Oh, Phebe, Phebe, Phebe! [*Rising, he runs off R, head bowed sorrowfully*].

ROSALIND. [*looking after SILVIUS*] Alas, poor shepherd! Searching of thy wound, I have by hard adventure found mine own.

CELIA. I pray you, one of you question yond man [*indicates CORIN*] if he for gold will give us any food: I faint almost to death.

TOUCHSTONE. [*calling to CORIN*] Holla, you clown!

ROSALIND. [*to TOUCHSTONE*] Peace, fool: he's not thy kinsman.

CORIN. [*turning toward them*] Who calls?

TOUCHSTONE. Your betters, sir.

ROSALIND. [*stepping toward C*] Peace, I say. Good even to you, friend.

CORIN. [*rising and stepping C toward ROSALIND*] And to you, gentle sir, and to you all.

ROSALIND. I prithee, shepherd, if that love or gold can in this desert place buy entertainment, bring us where we may rest

ourselves and feed: here's a young maid [*indicates CELIA, who is still sitting on the ground down L*] with travel much oppress'd and faints for succor.

CORIN. Fair sir, I pity her and wish, for her sake more than for mine own, my fortunes were more able to relieve her; but I am shepherd to another man and do not shear the fleeces that I graze: my master is of churlish disposition and little reckes to find the way to heaven by doing deeds of hospitality. Besides, his cote, his flocks and bounds of feed are now on sale.

ROSALIND. What is he that shall buy his flock and pasture?

CORIN. That young swain that you saw here but erewhile, [*points off stage after SILVIUS*] that cares little for buying any thing.

ROSALIND. I pray thee, if it stand with honesty, buy thou the cottage, pasture and the flock, and thou shalt have to pay for it of us.

CELIA. And we will mend thy wages. I like this place, and willingly could waste my time in it.

CORIN. Assuredly the thing is to be sold. Go with me. If you like upon report the soil, the profit and this kind of life, I will your very faithful feeder be and buy it with your gold right suddenly. [*He starts off L, ROSALIND following him. CELIA and TOUCHSTONE rise from the ground and hurry wearily after them*].

PART I — SCENE 5

The lawn of DUKE FREDERICK'S palace. DUKE FREDERICK enters angrily from L followed by three lords and two pages. He stands down L, at the edge of the balustrade. The third lord stands back of him, slightly to the R. The first and second lords stand almost in the C, facing the duke. The two pages cross and stand down R.

DUKE F. Can it be possible that no man saw them? It cannot be: some villains of my court are of consent and sufferance in this. [*On this he crosses to a little R of C. The first and second lords step quickly back out of his way. They turn to him apologetically*].

FIRST LORD. I cannot hear of any that did see her. The ladies, her attendants of her chamber, saw her a-bed, and in the morning early they found the bed untreasured of their mistress.

SECOND LORD. My lord, the roynish clown, at whom so oft

your grace was wont to laugh, is also missing. Hisperia, the princess' gentlewoman, confesses that she secretly o'erheard your daughter and her cousin much commend the parts and graces of the wrestler that did but lately foil the sinewy Charles; and she believes, wherever they are gone, that youth is surely in their company.

DUKE F. Send to his brother. Fetch that gallant hither. *[The first lord signals to one of the pages down R, who runs quickly off R. DUKE F. paces angrily back and forth at C, the lords solicitously following him. The page returns, immediately followed by OLIVER, who comes down C to DUKE FREDERICK].*

DUKE F. *[turning to glare at OLIVER]* Find out thy brother, wheresoe'er he is; seek him with candle; bring him dead or living within this twelvemonth, or turn thou no more to seek a living in our territory.

OLIVER. *[beseechingly]* O that your highness knew my heart in this! I never loved my brother in my life.

DUKE F. More villain thou. *[turns to lords at his L]* Well, push him out of doors, and let my officers of such nature make an extent upon his house and lands. *[First and second lords conduct OLIVER, his head bowed, out R; DUKE F., followed by third lord and pages, exits L].*

PART I — SCENE 6

The Forest. ORLANDO *from L enters with scroll of paper in hand.*

ORLANDO. *[fastening paper to tree in C]* Hang there, my verse, in witness of my love: *[turns around and speaks as if to the air]* O Rosalind! these trees shall be my books, and in their barks my thoughts I'll character; that every eye which in this forest looks shall see thy virtue witness'd everywhere. *[He runs off R].*
[Enter CORIN and TOUCHSTONE from L].

CORIN. And how like you this shepherd's life, Master Touchstone?

TOUCHSTONE. Truly, shepherd, in respect of itself, it is a good life; but in respect that it is a shepherd's life, it is naught. Wast ever in court, shepherd?

CORIN. No, truly.

TOUCHSTONE. Then thou art damned.

CORIN. Nay, I hope.

TOUCHSTONE. Truly, thou art damned, like an ill-roasted egg all on one side.

CORIN. For not being at court? Your reason.

TOUCHSTONE. Why, if thou never wast at court, thou never sawest good manners; if thou never sawest good manners, then thy manners must be wicked; and wickedness is sin, and sin is damnation. [*He says this with dramatic mock piety, eyes uplifted*]. Thou art in a parlous state, shepherd.

CORIN. Not a whit, Touchstone: those that are good manners at the court are as ridiculous in the country as the behavior of the country is most mockable at the court. You told me you salute not at the court, but you kiss your hands! That courtesy [*holds up his calloused, none too clean hands*] would be uncleanly, if courtiers were shepherds. [*looks off R*] Here comes young Master Ganymede, my new mistress' brother.

ROSALIND. [*enters from R, reading, paper in hand*]

From the east to western Ind,
No jewel is like Rosalind.
Her worth, being mounted on the wind,
Through all the world bears Rosalind.
All the pictures fairest lined
Are but black to Rosalind.
Let no fair be kept in mind
But the fair of Rosalind.

TOUCHSTONE. [*crossing R to her*] I'll rhyme you so eight years together.

ROSALIND. [*still looking at the paper, waves him away*] Out, fool!

TOUCHSTONE. For a taste: [*runs over L, jumps up on tree stump and stands as if composing poetry on the spur of the moment, pausing now and then to think of the proper word or line*]

If a hart do lack a hind,
Let him seek out Rosalind.
If the cat will after kind,
So be sure will Rosalind.

[*He pronounces "Rosalind" to rhyme with "hind" and "kind"*].

Winter garments must be lined,
So must gentle Rosalind.

[*He breaks off and points to paper in her hand*]. This is the very false gallop of verses. Why do you infect yourself with them?

ROSALIND. Peace, you dull fool! I found them on a tree.

TOUCHSTONE. Truly, the tree yields bad fruit.

ROSALIND. [*looking off L*] Peace! Here comes my sister, reading; stand aside. [*CORIN and TOUCHSTONE move back and sit on bench*].

CELIA. [*enters, reading from paper*]

Helen's cheek, but not her heart,
Cleopatra's majesty,
Atalanta's better part,
Sad Lucretia's modesty.
Thus Rosalind of many parts
By heavenly synod was devised,
Of many faces, eyes and hearts,
To have the touches dearest prized.
Heaven would that she these gifts should have,
And I to live and die her slave.

ROSALIND. [*crossing C to meet CELIA*] O most gentle pulpiter! What tedious homily of love have you wearied your parishioners withal and never cried, "Have patience, good people"!

CELIA. [*looking up from paper*] How now! [*sees CORIN and TOUCHSTONE*] Shepherd, go off a little. Go with him, sirrah.

TOUCHSTONE. [*starting off L*] Come, shepherd, let us make an honorable retreat, though not with bag and baggage, but with scrip and scrippage. [*CORIN and TOUCHSTONE exit L*].

CELIA. Didst thou hear these verses? [*points to paper*]

ROSALIND. O, yes, I heard them all, and more too; for some of them had in them more feet than the verses would bear.

CELIA. That's no matter: the feet might bear the verses.

ROSALIND. Ay, but the feet were lame and could not bear themselves without the verse.

CELIA. But didst thou hear without wondering how thy name should be hanged and carved upon these trees? [*points to paper hanging on tree C*].

ROSALIND. I was seven of the nine days out of the wonder before you came; for look here what I found on a palm-tree.

CELIA. [*archly*] Trow you who hath done this?

ROSALIND. Is it a man?

CELIA. And a chain, that you once wore, about his neck. Change you color?

ROSALIND. [*excitedly*] I prithee, who?

CELIA. Is it possible? [*teasingly; walks down L*]

ROSALIND. I prithee, tell me who it is, and speak apace. [*follows her, excited*] What manner of man?

CELIA. [*turning to her*] It is young Orlando, that tripped up the wrestler's heels and your heart both in an instant.

ROSALIND. [*amazed*] Nay, but the devil take mocking: speak, sad brow and true maid.

CELIA. I' faith, coz, 'tis he.

ROSALIND. [*joyously*] Orlando?

CELIA. Orlando.

ROSALIND. [*her joy turning to anxiety*] Alas the day! [*looking down at herself*] What shall I do with my doublet and hose? What did he when thou sawest him? What said he? How looked he? Wherein went he? What makes he here? Did he ask for me? Where remains he? How parted he with thee? And when shalt thou see him again? Answer me in one word. [*She fires the questions at CELIA one on top of the other*].

CELIA. [*holding up her hands to stop her*] You must borrow me Gargantua's mouth first. To say ay and no to these particulars is more than to answer in a catechism.

ROSALIND. But doth he know that I am in this forest and in man's apparel? Looks he as freshly as he did the day he wrestled?

CELIA. I found him under a tree, like a dropped acorn.

ROSALIND. [*happily*] It may well be called Jove's tree, when it drops forth such fruit.

CELIA. [*going to bench and sitting*] Give me audience, good madam.

ROSALIND. Proceed. [*She sits on the ground at CELIA's feet*].

CELIA. There lay he, stretched along, like a wounded knight.

ROSALIND. Though it be pity to see such a sight, it well becomes the ground.

CELIA. Cry "holla" to thy tongue, I prithee; it curvets unseasonably. He was furnished like a hunter.

ROSALIND. O, ominous! He comes to kill my heart.

CELIA. I would sing my song without a burden. Thou bringest me out of tune.

ROSALIND. Do you not know I am a woman? when I think, I must speak. Sweet, say on.

CELIA. You bring me out. [*looks off R*] Soft! Comes he not here? [*Enter ORLANDO from L*].

ROSALIND. 'Tis he: slink by, and note him. [*CELIA and ROSALIND quickly move upstage behind bench*].

ROSALIND. [*aside to CELIA, as ORLANDO crosses slowly to C*] I will speak to him like a saucy lackey and under that habit play the knave with him. [*louder, to ORLANDO*] Do you hear, forester?

ORLANDO. [*looking up, sees ROSALIND*] Very well: what would you?

ROSALIND. [*coming down C, toward ORLANDO*] I pray you, what is 't o'clock?

ORLANDO. You should ask me what time o' day. There's no clock in the forest.

ROSALIND. Then there's no true lover in the forest; else sighing every minute and groaning every hour would detect the lazy foot of Time as well as a clock.

ORLANDO. [*looking her over, smiles indulgently*] Where dwell you, pretty youth?

ROSALIND. [*indicates CELIA, who is standing up L*] With this shepherdess, my sister; here in the skirts of the forest, like fringe upon a petticoat.

ORLANDO. Are you native of this place? Your accent is something finer than you could purchase in so removed a dwelling.

ROSALIND. I have been told so of many: but indeed an old religious uncle of mine taught me to speak, who was in his youth an inland man; one that knew courtship too well, for there he fell in love. I have heard him read many lectures against it, and I thank God I am not a woman, to be touched with so many giddy offences as he hath generally taxed their whole sex withal.

ORLANDO. Can you remember any of the principal evils that he laid to the charge of women?

ROSALIND. There were none principal.

ORLANDO. I prithee, recount some of them.

ROSALIND. No, I will not cast away my physic but on those that are sick. There is a man haunts the forest, that abuses our young plants with carving "Rosalind" on their barks; hangs odes upon hawthorns and elegies on brambles, all, forsooth, deifying the name of Rosalind. If I could meet that fancy-monger, I would give him some good counsel, for he seems to have the quotidian of love upon him.

ORLANDO. I am he that is so love-shaked. [*crossing to tree stump and sitting*] I pray you, tell me your remedy.

ROSALIND. There is none of my uncle's marks upon you. He taught me how to know a man in love; in which cage of rushes I am sure you are not prisoner.

ORLANDO. What were his marks?

ROSALIND. A lean cheek, [*points to his cheek, then his eye*] which you have not, a blue eye and sunken, which you have not, an unquestionable spirit, which you have not: then your hose should be ungartered, your bonnet unbanded, your sleeve unbuttoned, your shoe untied [*She indicates the garments as she speaks*] and everything about you demonstrating a careless desolation; but you are no such man; you are rather point-device in your accoutrements as loving yourself than seeming the lover of any other.

ORLANDO. Fair youth, I would I could make thee believe I love.

ROSALIND. Me believe it! You may as soon make her that you love believe it; [*turns and says this aside*] which, I warrant, she is apter to do than to confess she does. But, in good sooth, are you he that hangs the verses on the trees, [*points to tree C*] wherein Rosalind is so admired?

ORLANDO. I swear to thee, youth, by the white hand of Rosalind, I am that he, that unfortunate he.

ROSALIND. But are you so much in love as your rhymes speak?

ORLANDO. [*sadly*] Neither rhyme nor reason can express how much.

ROSALIND. Love is merely a madness. Yet I profess curing it by counsel.

ORLANDO. Did you ever cure any so?

ROSALIND. Yes, one, and in this manner. [*strides back and forth as she speaks*] He was to imagine me his love, his mistress, and I set him every day to woo me: at which time would I, being but a moonish youth, grieve, be effeminate, changeable, longing and liking, proud, fantastical, apish, shallow, inconstant, full of fears, full of smiles, for every passion something and for no passion truly any thing: would now like him, now loathe him; then entertain him, then forswear him; now weep for him, then spit at him; that I drave my suitor from his mad humor of love to a living humor of madness. [*CELIA giggles and ROSALIND gives her a reproving look and goes on*]. And thus I cured him: and this way will I take upon me to wash your liver as clean as a sound sheep's heart, that there shall not be one spot of love in't.

ORLANDO. I would not be cured, youth.

ROSALIND. I would cure you, if you would but call me Rosalind and come every day to my cote and woo me.

ORLANDO. [*rising*] Now, by the faith of my love, I will. Tell me where it is.

ROSALIND. Go with me to it and I'll show it you: and by the way you shall tell me where in the forest you live. Will you go?

ORLANDO. With all my heart, good youth.

ROSALIND. [*starting off L*] Nay, you must call me Rosalind. Come, sister, will you go? [*They exit L. Enter TOUCHSTONE and AUDREY from R; JACQUES behind. AUDREY lags back, bashful, awkward, and grinning*].

TOUCHSTONE. Come apace, good Audrey: I will fetch up your goats, Audrey. And how, Audrey? am I the man yet? doth my simple feature content you?

AUDREY. [*giggling and turning away twisting her skirt*] Your features! Lord warrant us! What features?

TOUCHSTONE. I am here with thee and thy goats as the most capricious poet, honest Ovid, was among the Goths.

JACQUES. [*aside*] O knowledge ill-inhabited, worse than Jove in a thatched house!

TOUCHSTONE. Truly, I would the gods had made thee poetical.

AUDREY. [*bashfully*] I do not know what "poetical" is. Is it honest in deed and word? Is it a true thing?

TOUCHSTONE. No, truly.

AUDREY. Do you wish then that the gods had made me poetical?

TOUCHSTONE. I do, truly.

AUDREY. Would you not have me honest?

TOUCHSTONE. No, truly, unless thou wert hard-favored; for honesty coupled to beauty is to have honey a sauce to sugar.

AUDREY. Well, I am not fair; and therefore I pray the gods to make me honest.

TOUCHSTONE. But be it as it may be, I will marry thee, and to that end I have been with the vicar of the next village who hath promised to meet me in this place of the forest and to couple us.

JACQUES. [*aside*] I would fain see this meeting.

AUDREY. Well, the gods give us joy!

TOUCHSTONE. Amen. [*in pretended nobleness*] As a walled town is more worthier than a village, so is the forehead of a married man more honorable than the bare brow of a bachelor.

JACQUES. And will you, being a man of your breeding, be married under a bush [*indicates forest*] like a beggar? Get you to church, and have a good priest that can tell you what marriage is. Go thou with me, and let me counsel thee.

TOUCHSTONE. [*who has been pondering JACQUES' advice, shrugs his shoulders in assent and turns to AUDREY, who has been standing beside him, with blank expression*] Come, sweet Audrey; we must be married! [*They exit R, following JACQUES. ROSALIND enters from L, followed by CELIA*].

ROSALIND. [*moving to C, wringing her hands*] Never talk to me, I will weep.

CELIA. [*calmly*] Do, I prithee; but yet have the grace to consider that tears do not become a man. [*indicates ROSALIND's costume*]

ROSALIND. But have I not cause to weep?

CELIA. As good cause as one would desire; therefore weep. [*She stands as if waiting for ROSALIND to begin weeping*].

ROSALIND. [*not noticing, turns away in distress*] His very hair is of the dissembling color.

CELIA. [*in pretended earnest agreement*] Something browner than Judas's.

ROSALIND. [*turning indignantly*] I' faith, his hair is of a good color.

CELIA. [*pretending to agree heartily*] An excellent color.

ROSALIND. [*goes and sits on bench, sighing forlornly*] But why did he swear he would come this morning, and comes not?

CELIA. [*definitely*] Nay, certainly, there is no truth in him.

ROSALIND. [*anxiously*] Do you think so?

CELIA. Yes; I think he is not a pick-purse nor a horse-stealer, but for his verity in love, I do think him as concave as a covered goblet or a worm-eaten nut.

ROSALIND. [*almost in tears*] Not true in love?

CELIA. Yes, when he is in; but I think he is not in.

ROSALIND. [*defensively*] You have heard him swear downright he was.

CELIA. [*feigning seriousness*] "Was" is not "is." Besides, the oath of a lover is no stronger than the word of a tapster. [*looks off R*] Who comes here? [*Enter CORIN from R*]

CORIN. Mistress and master, you have oft inquired after the shepherd that complain'd of love, who you saw sitting by me on the turf, praising the proud disdainful shepherdess that was his mistress.

CELIA. Well, and what of him?

CORIN. If you will see a pageant truly play'd, between the pale complexion of true love and the red glow of scorn and proud disdain, go hence a little [*points up L*] and I shall conduct you, if you will mark it.

ROSALIND. [*rising*] O, come, let us remove; the sight of lovers feedeth those in love. [*ROSALIND, CELIA, and CORIN go up L behind tree. Enter SILVIUS and PHEBE from R; PHEBE marches in first, head high*].

SILVIUS. [*following her, arms out pleadingly*] Sweet Phebe, do not scorn me; do not, Phebe; say that you love me not, but say not so in bitterness. O dear Phebe, if ever — as that ever may be near — you meet in some fresh cheek the power of fancy, then shall you know the wounds invisible that love's keen arrows make.

PHEBE. But till that time come not thou near me: and when that time comes, afflict me with thy mocks, pity me not; as till that time I shall not pity thee.

ROSALIND. [*coming down L*] And why, I pray you? [*to PHEBE*] Who might be your mother, that you insult, exult, and all at once, over the wretched? Must you be therefore proud and pitiless? Why, what means this? Why do you look on me? 'Od's my little life, I think she means to tangle my eyes too! No, faith, proud mistress, hope not after it: 'tis not your inky brows, your black silk hair, nor your cheek of cream, that can entame my spirits to your worship. [*to SILVIUS*] You foolish shepherd, wherefore do you follow her? You are a thousand times a properer man than she a woman: [*to PHEBE, who has been watching her with admiration*] down on your knees, and thank heaven, fasting, for a good man's love: cry the man mercy; love him; take his offer. So take her to thee, shepherd: [*starts off L*] fare you well.

PHEBE. [*steps forward to detain him*] Sweet youth, I pray you, chide a year together. I had rather hear you chide than this man woo.

ROSALIND. Why look you so upon me?

PHEBE. [*sighing ecstatically*] For no ill will I bear you.

ROSALIND. [*crossly*] I pray you, do not fall in love with me, for I am falser than vows made in wine. Besides, I like you not. Shepherd, ply her hard. [*to CELIA*] Come, sister. Shepherdess, look on him better, and be not proud. [*turns to go L*] Come, to our flock. [*ROSALIND, CELIA, and CORIN exit L*].

PHEBE. [*looking after ROSALIND as if in a trance*] Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might, "Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?"

SILVIUS. Sweet Phebe —

PHEBE. [*waking from her trance*] Ha, what say'st thou, Silvius?

SILVIUS. Sweet Phebe, pity me.

PHEBE. Silvius, the time was that I hated thee, and yet it is not that I bear thee love; but since that thou canst talk of love so well, thy company, which erst was irksome to me, I will endure, and I'll employ thee too: but do not look for further recompense than thine own gladness that thou art employ'd.

SILVIUS. [*humbly*] Loose now and then a scatter'd smile, and that I'll live upon.

PHEBE. Know'st thou the youth that spoke to me erewhile?

SILVIUS. Not very well, but I have met him oft.

PHEBE. Think not I love him, though I ask for him; 'tis but a peevish boy; yet he talks well; but what care I for words? [*looks after ROSALIND*] It is a pretty youth: but, sure, he's proud, and yet his pride becomes him: he'll make a proper man. There be some women, Silvius, had they mark'd him in parcels as I did, would have gone near to fall in love with him. [*dreamily*] He said mine eyes were black and my hair black: and, now I am remembered, scorned at me. I marvel why I answered not again. [*decisively*] I'll write to him a very taunting letter, and thou shalt bear it: wilt thou, Silvius?

SILVIUS. Phebe, with all my heart.

PHEBE. I'll write it straight; the matter's in my head and in my heart: I will be bitter with him and passing short. Go with me, Silvius. [*She exits R, followed by SILVIUS*].

CURTAIN

PART II — SCENE I

The Forest. Enter ROSALIND and CELIA from L.

ROSALIND. How say you now? Is it not past two o'clock?
And here much Orlando! [*sitting on tree stump L*]

CELIA. [*walking C*] I warrant you, with pure love and
troubled brain, he is gone forth to sleep. [*looks off R*] Look,
who comes here. [*Enter OLIVER from R*].

OLIVER. Good morrow, fair ones. Pray you, if you know,
where in the purlieus of this forest stands a sheepcote fenced
about with olive trees?

CELIA. [*looks at him, smiles, then with downcast eyes*] West of
this place, down in the neighbor bottom.

OLIVER. [*speaking to them both, but looking at CELIA*] If that
an eye may profit by a tongue, then should I know you by
description; [*points to ROSALIND*] "the boy is fair, of female
favor; and the woman — [*looks at CELIA, almost tenderly*] low
and browner than her brother." [*He seems fascinated by CELIA;
finally he recovers and speaks in a more businesslike tone*]. Are not
you the owner of the house I did inquire for?

CELIA. [*smiling shyly at him*] It is no boast, being ask'd, to
say we are.

OLIVER. Orlando doth commend him to you both, [*ROSA-
LIND, who has been sitting down L on stump, not paying much atten-
tion, becomes alert at the mention of ORLANDO's name*] and to that
youth he calls his Rosalind [*holds up stained handkerchief*] he sends
this bloody napkin. [*to ROSALIND, who has come quickly down C*]
Are you he?

ROSALIND. [*quickly and anxiously*] I am. What must we un-
derstand by this? [*points to handkerchief*]

OLIVER. Some of my shame; if you will know of me what
man I am, and how, and why, and where this handkercher was
stain'd.

CELIA. I pray you, tell it.

OLIVER. When last the young Orlando parted from you he
left a promise to return again within an hour, and pacing

through the forest, lo, what befel! he threw his eye aside, and mark what object did present itself: under an oak [*He points to the ground gesturing as he describes the scene as if it were taking place before their very eyes*] a wretched ragged man, o'ergrown with hair, lay sleeping on his back. About his neck a green and gilded snake had wreathed itself, but suddenly, seeing Orlando, it unlinked itself, and with indented glides did slip away into a bush: under which bush's shade a lioness lay crouching, head on ground, with catlike watch, when that the sleeping man should stir. This seen, Orlando did approach the man and found it was his brother, his elder brother.

CELIA. O, I have heard him speak of that same brother; and he did render him the most unnatural that lived amongst men.

OLIVER. And well he might so do, for well I know he was unnatural.

ROSALIND. [*anxiously*] But, to Orlando: did he leave him there, food to the hungry lioness?

OLIVER. Twice did he turn his back. But kindness, nobler ever than revenge, made him give battle to the lioness, who quickly fell before him; in which hurtling from miserable slumber I awaked.

CELIA. [*stepping back*] Are you his brother?

ROSALIND. Was't you he rescued?

CELIA. Was't you that did so oft contrive to kill him?

OLIVER. [*with bowed head*] 'Twas I; but 'tis not I: I do not shame to tell you what I was, since my conversion so sweetly tastes, being the thing I am. [*ROSALIND reaches out as if to comfort him*].

ROSALIND. But, for the bloody napkin?

OLIVER. By and by. When from the first to last betwixt us two tears our recountments had most kindly bathed, as how I came into that desert place: — in brief, he led me to the gentle duke, who gave me fresh array and entertainment, committing me unto my brother's love; who led me instantly unto his cave, there stripped himself, and here upon his arm the lioness had torn some flesh away, which all this while had bled; and now he fainted and cried, in fainting, upon Rosalind. Brief, I recover'd him, bound up his wound; and, after some small

space, being strong at heart, he sent me hither, stranger as I am, to tell this story, that you might excuse his broken promise, and to give this napkin dyed in his blood unto the shepherd youth that he in sport doth call his Rosalind. [ROSALIND sways and starts to fall].

CELIA. [*rushing to assist her*] Why, how now, Ganymede! Sweet Ganymede!

OLIVER. Many will swoon when they do look on blood. [*He assists ROSALIND from the other side and together they lead her to the bench*].

CELIA. There is more in it. Cousin Ganymede!

OLIVER. Look, he recovers.

ROSALIND. [*opening her eyes*] I would I were at home.

CELIA. We'll lead you thither. I pray you, will you take him by the arm?

OLIVER. Be of good cheer, youth: you a man! you lack a man's heart. [*He takes ROSALIND's arm*].

ROSALIND. I do so, I confess it.

CELIA. Good sir, go with us.

OLIVER. [*as he and CELIA lead ROSALIND toward exit R*] That will I, for I must bear answer back how you excuse my brother, Rosalind.

ROSALIND. I shall devise something. [*SILVIUS enters from L, calling to ROSALIND*].

SILVIUS. My errand is to you, fair youth; [*ROSALIND turns and comes back to C, leaving OLIVER and CELIA conversing together at exit R*]. My gentle Phebe bid me give you this. [*holds out letter*] I know not the contents; but as I guess by the stern brow and waspish action which she did use as she was writing of it, it bears an angry tenor. Pardon me; I am but as a guiltless messenger.

ROSALIND. [*reading letter*] Patience herself would startle at this letter. She says I am not fair, and that she could not love me were man as rare as phoenix. 'Od's my will! Her love is not the hare that I do hunt: why writes she so to me? Well, shepherd, well, this is a letter of your own device.

SILVIUS. No, I protest, I know not the contents: Phebe did write it.

ROSALIND. Come, come, you are a fool and turned into the

extremity of love. I say she never did invent this letter; this is a man's invention and his hand.

SILVIUS. Sure, it is hers.

ROSALIND. Why, 'tis a boisterous and a cruel style, a style for challengers; women's gentle brain could not drop forth such giant-rude invention. Will you hear the letter?

SILVIUS. So please you, for I never heard it yet.

ROSALIND. Mark how the tyrant writes. [*She reads*].

“Art thou god to shepherd turned,
That a maiden's heart hath burn'd?”

Can a woman rail thus? [*looks at SILVIUS*]

SILVIUS. Call you this railing?

ROSALIND. [*reads*]

“Why, thy godhead laid apart,

Warr'st thou with a woman's heart?” [*again to SILVIUS*]

Did you ever hear such railing? [*reads on*]

“He that brings this love to thee,
Little knows this love in me:
And by him seal up thy mind;
Whether that thy youth and kind
Will the faithful offer take
Of me and all that I can make;
Or else by him my love deny,
And then I'll study how to die.”

SILVIUS. [*sadly*] Call you this chiding? [*points to letter*]

CELIA. [*who has come down C, as OLIVER exited R*] Alas, poor shepherd!

ROSALIND. [*to CELIA*] Do you pity him? No, he deserves no pity. [*to SILVIUS*] Wilt thou love such a woman? [*taps letter angrily*] Well, go your way to her, for I see love hath made you a tame snake, and say this to her; that if she loves me, I charge her to love thee; and if she will not, I will never have her unless thou entreat for her. If you be a true lover, hence, [*points off R, and SILVIUS hurries out*] and not a word; for here comes more company. [*CELIA and ROSALIND exit R*]. [*Enter TOUCHSTONE and AUDREY from L*].

TOUCHSTONE. Tomorrow is the joyful day, Audrey; to-morrow will we be married.

AUDREY. [*giggling and twisting her skirt*] I do desire it with all my heart; and I hope it is no dishonest desire to desire to be a woman of the world. [*They exit R*].

PART II — SCENE 2

The Forest. Enter ORLANDO and OLIVER from R, ORLANDO with his arm tied up.

ORLANDO. Is't possible that on so little acquaintance you should like her? That but seeing you should love her? And loving woo? And, wooing, she should grant?

OLIVER. Neither call the giddiness of it in question, the poverty of her, the small acquaintance, my sudden wooing, nor her sudden consenting; but say with me, I love Aliena; say with her that she loves me: it shall be to your good; for my father's house and all the revenue that was old Sir Rowland's will I estate upon you, and here live and die a shepherd.

ORLANDO. You have my consent. Let your wedding be to-morrow: thither will I invite the duke and all's contented followers. Go you and prepare Aliena; for look you, here comes my Rosalind. [*OLIVER starts off L. Enter ROSALIND from L*].

ROSALIND. God save you, brother.

OLIVER. And you, fair sister. [*Exits L*].

ROSALIND. O, my dear Orlando, how it grieves me to see thee wear thy heart in a scarf!

ORLANDO. It is my arm.

ROSALIND. I thought thy heart had been wounded with the claws of a lion.

ORLANDO. Wounded it is, but with the eyes of a lady.

ROSALIND. Did your brother tell you how I counterfeited to swoon when he showed me your handkercher?

ORLANDO. Ay, and greater wonders than that.

ROSALIND. O, I know where you are: for your brother and my sister no sooner met but they looked, no sooner looked but they loved, no sooner loved but they sighed, no sooner sighed

but they asked one another the reason, no sooner knew the reason but they sought the remedy. They are in the very wrath of love and they will together; clubs cannot part them.

ORLANDO. They shall be married tomorrow, and I will bid the duke to the nuptial. [*turning and sitting dejectedly on bench*] But, O, how bitter a thing it is to look into happiness through another man's eyes! By so much the more shall I tomorrow be at the height of heart-heaviness, by how much I shall think my brother happy in having what he wishes for.

ROSALIND. Why, then, tomorrow I cannot serve your turn for Rosalind?

ORLANDO. I can live no longer by thinking.

ROSALIND. I will weary you then no longer with idle talking. Believe then, if you please, that I can do strange things: I have, since I was three year old, conversed with a magician, most profound in his art and yet not damnable. If you do love Rosalind so near the heart as your gesture cries it out, when your brother marries Aliena, shall you marry her: I know into what straits of fortune she is driven; and it is not impossible to me, if it appear not inconvenient to you, to set her before your eyes tomorrow, human as she is, and without any danger.

ORLANDO. [*rising*] Speakest thou in sober meanings?

ROSALIND. By my life, I do; which I tender dearly, though I say I am a magician. Therefore, put you in your best array; bid your friends; for if you will be married tomorrow, you shall, and to Rosalind, if you will. [*Enter SILVIUS and PHEBE from R*]. Look, here comes a lover of mine and a lover of hers.

PHEBE. [*to ROSALIND*] Youth, you have done me much ungentleness, to show the letter that I writ to you.

ROSALIND. I care not if I have. It is my study to seem despiteful and ungentle to you. You are there followed by a faithful shepherd. Look upon him, love him. He worships you.

PHEBE. [*to SILVIUS*] Good shepherd, tell this youth what 'tis to love.

SILVIUS. It is to be all made of sighs and tears; [*sighs*] and so am I for Phebe.

PHEBE. [*sighing*] And I for Ganymede.

ORLANDO. And I for Rosalind.

ROSALIND. And I for no woman.

SILVIUS. It is to be all made of faith and service; [*sighs*] and so am I for Phebe.

PHEBE. [*sighs*] And I for Ganymede.

ORLANDO. [*sighs*] And I for Rosalind.

ROSALIND. And I for no woman.

SILVIUS. It is to be all made of fantasy, all adoration, duty, and observance, all humbleness, all patience and impatience, and so am I for Phebe.

PHEBE. And so am I for Ganymede.

ORLANDO. And so am I for Rosalind.

ROSALIND. And so am I for no woman.

PHEBE. [*to ROSALIND*] If this be so, why blame you me to love you?

SILVIUS. [*to PHEBE*] If this be so, why blame you me to love you?

ORLANDO. [*to no one*] If this be so, why blame you me to love you?

ROSALIND. [*quickly to ORLANDO*] Why do you speak too, "Why blame you me to love you?"

ORLANDO. To her that is not here, nor doth not hear. [*ROSALIND sighs in relief*].

ROSALIND. Pray you, no more of this; [*to SILVIUS*] I will help you, if I can. [*to PHEBE*] I would love you, if I could. Tomorrow meet me all together. [*to PHEBE*] I will marry you, if ever I marry woman, and I'll be married tomorrow: [*to ORLANDO*] I will satisfy you, if ever I satisfied man, and you shall be married tomorrow: [*to SILVIUS*] I will content you, if what pleases you contents you, and you shall be married tomorrow. [*to ORLANDO*] As you love Rosalind, meet: [*to SILVIUS*] as you love Phebe, meet. And as I love no woman, I'll meet. So fare you well. I have left you commands.

SILVIUS. I'll not fail, if I live.

PHEBE. Nor I.

ORLANDO. Nor I. [*ROSALIND, SILVIUS, PHEBE, and ORLANDO exit L*].

PART II — SCENE 3

The Forest. Enter DUKE S., AMIENS, JACQUES, ORLANDO, OLIVER, and CELIA from L. DUKE S. and ORLANDO come down C, talking together. CELIA and OLIVER come in hand in hand. She sits on stump L, he stands on her R, leaning over and talking to her. AMIENS and JACQUES sit on bench C.

DUKE S. Dost thou believe, Orlando, that the boy can do all this that he hath promised?

ORLANDO. I sometimes do believe, and sometimes do not; as those that fear they hope, and know they fear. [*Enter ROSALIND, SILVIUS, and PHEBE from R*].

ROSALIND. [*to SILVIUS and PHEBE, then crossing to C to duke and ORLANDO*] Patience once more, whiles our compact is urged; you say, if I bring in your Rosalind, you will bestow her on Orlando here?

DUKE S. That would I, had I kingdoms to give with her.

ROSALIND. [*to ORLANDO*] And you say, you will have her, when I bring her?

ORLANDO. [*fervently*] That would I, were I of all kingdoms king.

ROSALIND. [*to PHEBE*] You say, you'll marry me, if I be willing?

PHEBE. That will I, should I die the hour after.

ROSALIND. But if you do refuse to marry me, you'll give yourself to this most faithful shepherd? [*indicates SILVIUS*]

PHEBE. So is the bargain.

ROSALIND. [*to SILVIUS*] You say, that you'll have Phebe, if she will?

SILVIUS. Though to have her and death were both one thing.

ROSALIND. I have promised to make all this matter even. Keep you your word, O duke, to give your daughter: you yours, Orlando, to receive his daughter: keep your word, Phebe, that you'll marry me, or else refusing me, to wed this shepherd: keep your word, Silvius, that you'll marry her, if she refuse me: and from hence I go, to make these doubts all even. [*She motions to CELIA, who rises and comes to her. ROSALIND and CELIA exit R. PHEBE and SILVIUS step back up R and stand together*].

DUKE S. [*looking after her*] I do remember in this shepherd boy some lively touches of my daughter's favor.

ORLANDO. My lord, the first time that I ever saw him me-thought he was a brother to your daughter: but, my good lord, this boy is forest-born, and hath been tutored in the rudiments of many desperate studies by his uncle, whom he reports to be a great magician. [*Enter TOUCHSTONE and AUDREY from L*].

JACQUES. [*rising from bench*] There is, sure, another flood toward, and these couples are coming to the ark. Here comes a pair of very strange beasts, which in all tongues are called fools.

TOUCHSTONE. Salutation and greeting to you all!

JACQUES. [*to duke*] Good my lord, bid him welcome: this is the motley-minded gentleman that I have so often met in the forest: he hath been a courtier, he swears.

TOUCHSTONE. If any man doubt that, let him put me to my purgation.

JACQUES. [*to duke*] Good my lord, like this fellow.

DUKE S. I like him very well.

TOUCHSTONE. God 'ild you, sir; I desire you of the like. I press in here, sir, amongst the rest of the country copulatives, to swear and to forswear; according as marriage binds and blood breaks: [*indicating the bashful, giggling AUDREY by his side*] a poor virgin, sir, an ill-favored thing, sir, but mine own; a poor humor of mine, sir, to take that that no man else will.

JACQUES. Is this not a rare fellow, my lord? [*TOUCHSTONE and AUDREY step back LC between bench and tree stump. ROSALIND re-enters from R, dressed as ROSALIND herself, in rich court dress. CELIA follows, also in court dress*].

ROSALIND. [*to DUKE S.*] To you I give myself, for I am yours. [*to ORLANDO*] To you I give myself, for I am yours.

DUKE S. If there be truth in sight, you are my Rosalind. [*embraces her*]

PHEBE. [*mournfully*] If sight and shape be true, why then, my love, adieu!

ROSALIND. [*to duke*] I'll have no father, if you be not he: [*to ORLANDO*] I'll have no husband, if you be not he: [*duke takes ROSALIND'S hand and puts it in ORLANDO'S. ROSALIND and ORLANDO stand together LC*].

DUKE S. [*to CELIA*] Oh, my dear niece, welcome thou art to me! Even daughter, welcome in no less degree. [*He embraces her, then she goes L to tree stump to stand by OLIVER*].

PHEBE. [*to SILVIUS*] I will not eat my word, now thou art mine; thy faith my fancy to thee doth combine. [*PHEBE and SILVIUS step back RC*].

[*Enter JACQUES DE BOYS from R*].

JACQUES DE BOYS. [*Everyone stops his talking and looks up to listen to him*]. Let me have audience for a word or two: I am the second son of old Sir Rowland, that bring these tidings to this fair assembly. Duke Frederick, hearing how that every day men of great worth resorted to this forest, addressed a mighty power, purposely to take his [*indicates DUKE S.*] brother here and put him to the sword: and to the skirts of this wild wood he came, where meeting with an old religious man, after some question with him, was converted both from his enterprise and from the world, his crown bequeathing to his banish'd brother, and all their lands restored to them again that were with him exiled. [*He kneels before DUKE S., others turn to each other excitedly*]. This to be true, I do engage my life.

DUKE S. [*raising him up*] Welcome, young man; thou offer'st fairly to thy brothers' wedding: [*indicates OLIVER and ORLANDO*] First, in this forest let us do those ends that here were well begun and well begot: and after, every of this happy number that have endured shrewd days and nights with us shall share the good of our returned fortune. Meantime, forget this new-fall'n dignity and fall into our rustic revelry. Play, music! And you, brides and bridegrooms all, with measure heap'd in joy, to the measures fall.

JACQUES. [*stepping down to DE BOYS*] Sir, by your patience. If I heard you rightly, the duke hath put on a religious life and thrown into neglect the pompous court.

JACQUES DE BOYS. He hath.

JACQUES. To him will I: out of these convertites there is much matter to be heard and learn'd. [*to duke*] You to your former honor I bequeath; your patience and your virtue well deserves it: [*to ORLANDO*] you to a love that your true faith doth merit: [*to OLIVER*] you to your land and love and great allies: [*to SILVIUS*] you to a long and well-deserved bed: [*to TOUCHSTONE*] and you to wrangling. So, to your pleasures: I am for other than for dancing measures. [*starts off R*]

DUKE S. Stay, Jacques, stay.

JACQUES. To see no pastime I. What you would have I'll stay to know at your abandon'd cave. [*exits R*]

DUKE S. Proceed, proceed. We will begin these rites, as we do trust they'll end, in true delights. [*Music off stage. If possible arrange a simple country dance for the couples which begins as the curtains close*].

THE END

Suggestions to Producers

A CYCLORAMA SETTING, QUITE SIMPLE, IS effective for the production of this version of Oliver Goldsmith's comedy, *She Stoops to Conquer*. The draped stage particularly adapts itself to the period of this play. With cyclorama setting, only the furniture need be changed to set the various scenes. In the beginning, the cyclorama should be hung to allow an entrance down right and down left. These openings are then permanent for each of the scenes. For the first scene, the parlor of the Hardcastle mansion, an opening should be arranged in the center, rear. This can be utilized as a door opening in the scene in the Hardcastle home, and left closed for the other scenes. With the cyclorama setting, the stage is set for the three scenes, and quick changes may be made by simply moving off and on the pieces of furniture.

Cardboard scenery against a cyclorama background will give an even more appropriate setting for the play. For the scenes in the Hardcastle mansion, cardboard door pieces, a fireplace, and perhaps a window piece can be set against the cyclorama background. These pieces should be painted a dark brown, resembling mahogany or walnut, and should seem to be ornate and carved. For the inn scene, short cardboard pieces can be built to resemble half-timbered walls. Cardboard door flats and a fireplace flat, painted to give the effect of rough-hewn walls, can be constructed and painted. For the garden setting, cardboard pieces work in admirably. A cardboard groundrow, cut in profile, and painted to represent a low hedge or bushes, can be set across the back of the stage. Gnarled trees can be cut of cardboard and braced to stand at various positions on the stage. A gate of cardboard can be constructed and used as a decorative piece rather than as a practical one.

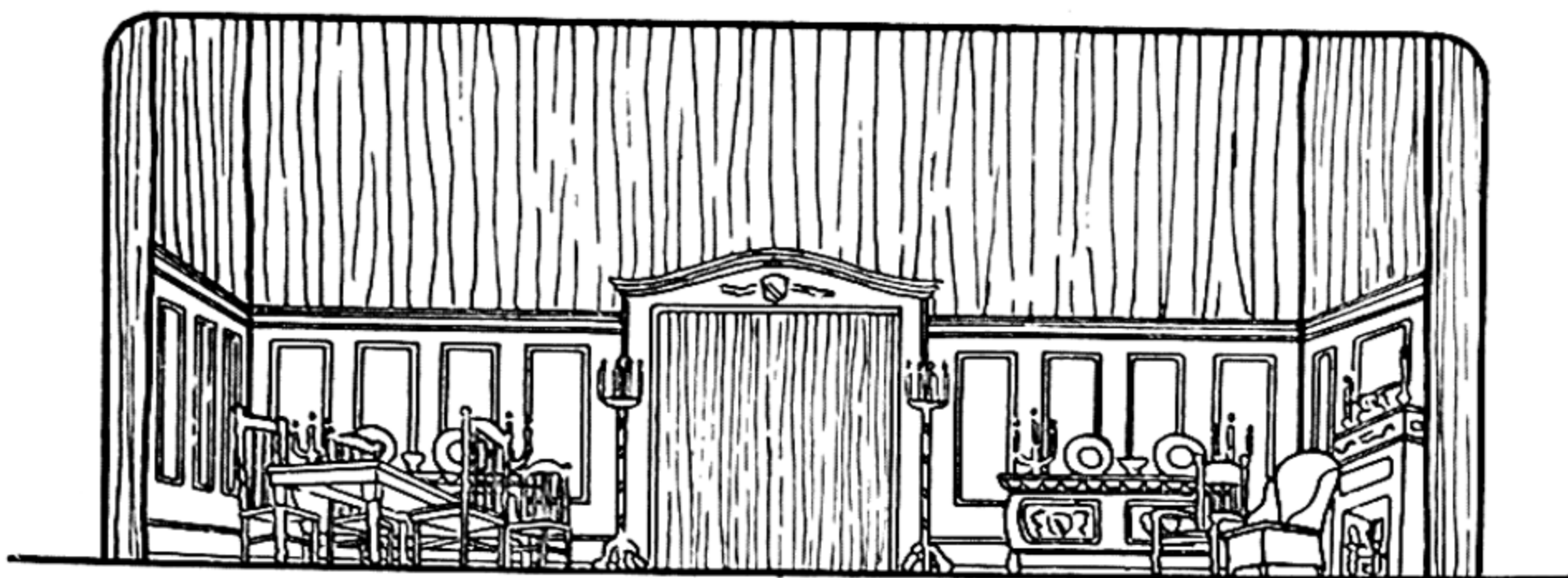
If a complete setting is to be attempted, careful plans should be drawn for the three settings. For the scenes in the Hardcastle home, a full-sized set of flats should be used. These flats should be painted a dull brown or tan with a stenciled figure over it in a large pattern or covered with a scenic wallpaper design. Dark brown woodwork and paneling around door openings and fireplace should be used. The center door opening in the rear may be double-sized, or the width of two flats. No practical doors need be used here, but the opening may be backed up by a row of flats set several feet behind to present the effect of a corridor or hall running behind the opening. Graceful, ornate furniture, candelabra, and brass pieces will add to the effect of this scene. The complete setting for the inn scene can be planned to fit inside the first set. The inn scene should be represented by flats painted in shades of brown to give the half-timbered, cross-beamed effect. Doors should be painted to represent heavy, rough-hewn lumber. The fireplace flat can contain a wide opening with a metal hood hung on the flat over the opening. Crude furniture adds to the effect of this scene. For the complete garden setting, a painted backdrop can be used, and wood wings, that is, side flats representing a forest exterior. Actual bushes and tree trunks can be used.

LIGHTING

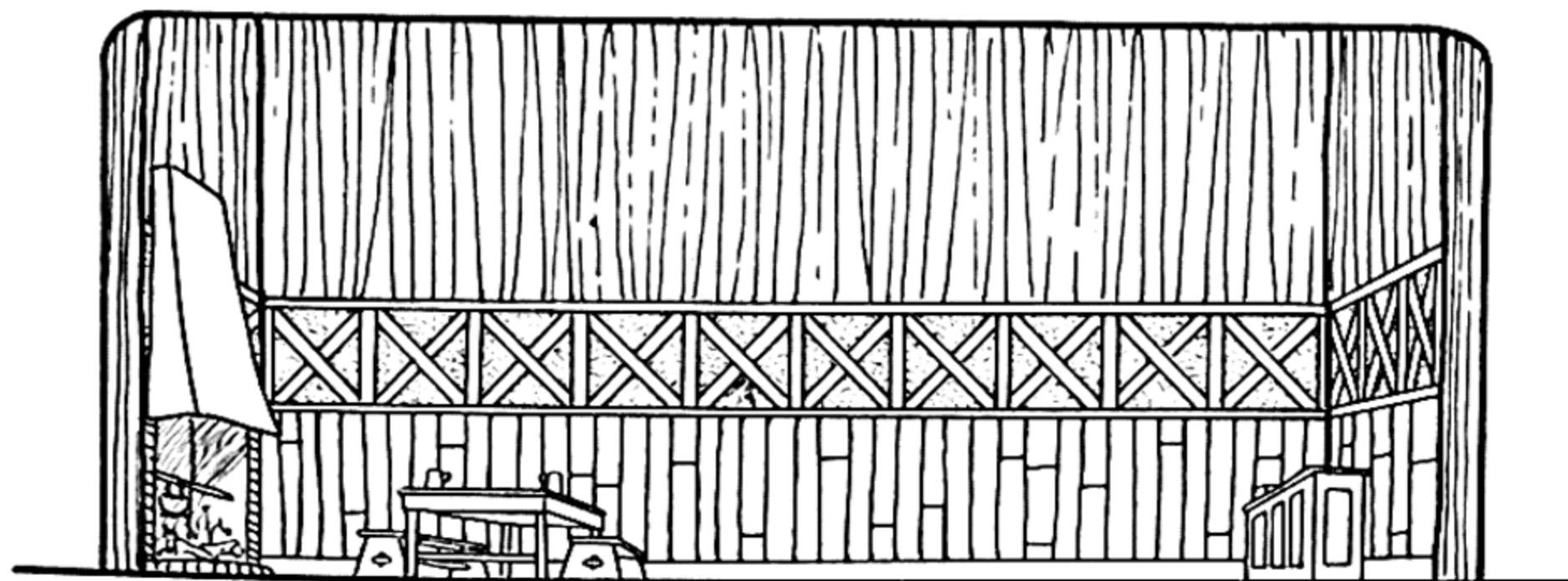
The lighting for *She Stoops to Conquer* should be of a subdued tone, as nearly as possible representing the light obtained from candles.

For the scenes in the Hardcastle home, more light may be used than in any other scene. Borderlights will illuminate the setting. Spotlights can light the acting areas, center, down right, and down left. A spot may be used backstage to shed light from the fireplace. Floods should be used to light the backings outside the door openings.

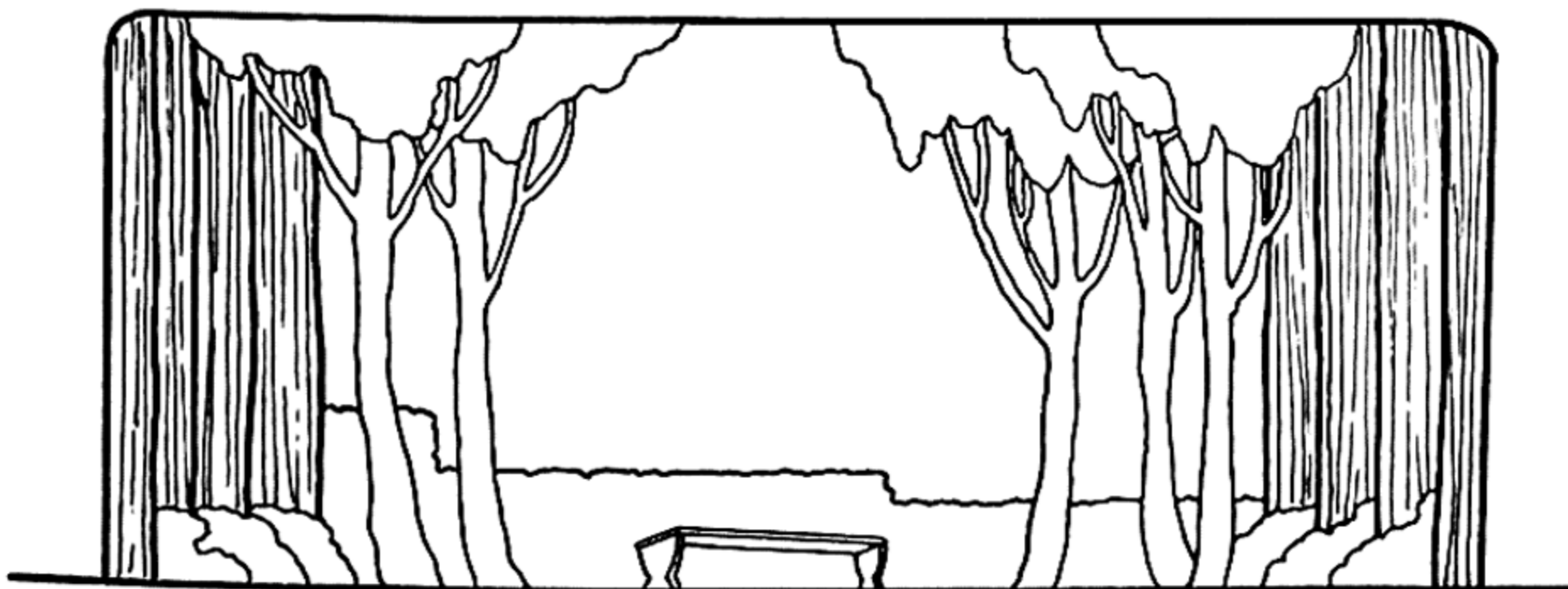
For the tavern scene, the lights should be comparatively dim. The borderlights, dim, will light the setting. A pleasing effect can be obtained by having a spot concealed in the great open fireplace, with most of the illumination seeming to come from there.



HARDCASTLE MANSION



THE THREE PIGEONS INN



HARDCASTLE GARDEN

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER ©

The garden setting should be dimly lighted. The border-lights dimmed down, with blue gelatines over them, will create a night effect. A single spotlight, giving off blue or pale purple light, will adequately light the center acting area.

PROPERTIES

The properties for *She Stoops to Conquer* should be selected carefully in order to preserve the period of the play.

The list of hand properties called for in the action of the play, which may be added to according to the ingenuity of the actor and director, are:

Bell off stage	Handkerchief for Marlow
Whip for Tony	Bunch of keys for Miss Hard-
Ale mugs in tavern	castle
Punch tankard for Diggory	Broom and letter for Diggory
Bill of fare for Diggory	Casket of jewels
Fan for Miss Hardcastle	

Stage properties:

For the Hardcastle house:

- Two large, ornate cabinets, chests, or sideboards
- One winged easy chair in upholstered material
- One carved armchair
- One ornate carved, long table with four straight chairs
- Two table candelabra with candles
- Two candelabra standards with candles
- Decorative pieces of porcelain, glass, and silverware; a painted screen, and perhaps a spinet or harpsichord may be used to "dress" the set for the scene in the Hardcastle mansion

For the inn scene:

- One rough-hewn long table (may be constructed by laying planks across two large barrels) with benches
- Iron kettle in fireplace
- Counter or long table, perhaps resembling a bar
- Sign, *Three Pigeons Inn*, in Old English lettering, hung over counter
- Candle stubs in bottles on table and counter

For the garden scene:

- Formal garden bench

COSTUMES

She Stoops to Conquer, if costumed properly, can present a charming and handsome picture. The elaborate dress of the period adapts itself to a delightful stage presentation. But a word to the wise director! If your budget will possibly allow the rental of costumes from a reliable theatrical costumer, you can dress your cast beautifully and authentically with very little worry. However, renting costumes for such a play as *She Stoops to Conquer* is no inexpensive proposition. Then, too, there is the really delightful experience of turning out beautiful and appropriate costumes by selecting the materials, and by designing and actually making the pieces. It is a fine opportunity for expression on the part of members of your dramatic group, and will aid in establishing a permanent wardrobe. These costumes can later be revived for such productions as *The Rivals*, *School for Scandal*, *Berkeley Square*, and any plays or pageants laid in the time of the American Revolution.

Let us decide to make the costumes. The period is late Georgian, the days of the curled wig, full-skirted coat, knee breeches, waistcoat, and cocked hat for the men, and the towering hairdress, full skirts, dainty ruffles, high heels, overgowns, lace and ribbon, and jewels and fans for the women.

Let us go to the individual costumes for the characters.

Kate Hardcastle. A Martha Washington pattern can be used. For her first costume, an elaborate dress should be designed. A very full petticoat of unbleached muslin, or some other inexpensive material, should be made in one or two thicknesses. The dress can be made of sateen, a drapery material, dimity, chintz, or an inexpensive silk material such as rayon taffeta. The bodice should be tight, the neck low cut and square in front with a ruffle or lace edging. Short, slightly puffed sleeves with a ruffle falling over the elbow are appropriate. The very full skirt may be held out at the hips by panniers, that is, a semicircle of wire on each hip or a roll of padding which extends the skirt out beyond the hips. A slight bustle in the back of the skirt adds to the silhouette. An overdress of contrasting material may be draped and looped up about the pannier and in back. Flower festoons, ribbon loops, tassels,

bows, and lace trim the dress. High-heeled pumps, decorated with large buckles or bows, can easily be made to look authentic for the costume. Kate should, of course, carry a folding fan.

Her maid's dress can be very picturesquely fashioned from bright flowered chintz, printed dimity, or sprigged calico. It should be cut on simple lines, full-skirted but not too elaborate. A simple white ruffle or fichu at the neck and ruffled sleeves will give a dainty simplicity. She should wear a little frilly cap resembling a dust cap with the maid's dress. She may wear a simple black velvet band around her throat. To the waist or girdle of this dress a ring of heavy keys should be attached.

Constance Neville. This costume is fashioned much like Kate Hardcastle's, but perhaps a bit more elaborate. Constance may have her petticoats ruffled and decorated. Contrast with Kate's costume can be obtained in the choice of material, the color, and decoration.

Constance, for exterior scenes, or entrance from outside, wears a hat, somewhat of a poke bonnet shape, tied with ribbons under the chin and adorned with ostrich plumes. Her outer garment for exterior scenes is a long cloak or cape made of a material resembling wool. Outing flannel serves admirably. The cape may have a hood attached, and she may carry a small muff.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Representing the height of fashion, Mrs. Hardcastle's costume should be elaborate to the most minute degree. Exaggeration in her costume will add to the general effect. Her dress should be of an elaborate-looking silk material, or of a large floral-patterned chintz. Her petticoats may be much beruffled and trimmed with bows and lace. The dress and overdress, especially the loops and drapes, are augmented by great rosettes, fancy bows, gold tassels, and gold cord (all obtainable from a lamp shade department). Rings, bracelets, brooches, and patches (black beauty marks) are much in evidence. She should have a long cape and hood for the exterior scene. Her shoes can be made by decorating satin or plain pumps with elaborate bows and buckles.

Young Marlow. A "colonial" pattern may be used as a guide

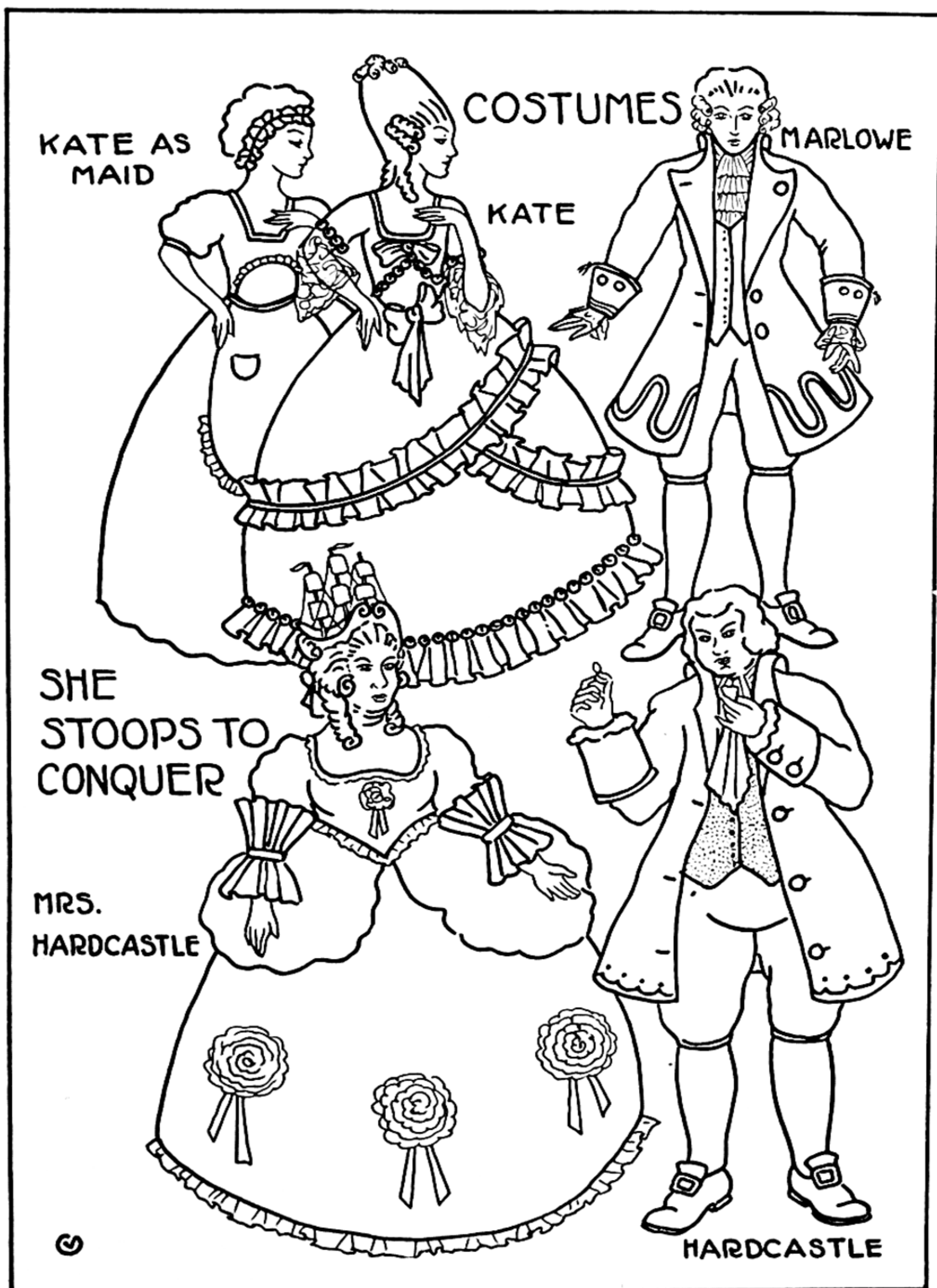


PLATE XXVI

for young Marlow's costume. Underneath his waistcoat (a vest with or without sleeves) is a simple, full, white shirt, frilled at neck and cuffs. The waistcoat, which fastens down the front, comes almost to the hips. It can be made of outing flannel, sateen, or velveteen, and bright colors and embroidery will make it the waistcoat of a fashionable young man. Tight-fitting breeches, ending just below the knee, can be made from velveteen, outing flannel, or a heavy grade of sateen. Long stockings (cotton stockings obtained at the ten-cent store) of a light color may be worn under the breeches. Over the costume is worn a long-sleeved coat with lapels, tight-fitting to the waist, where a full knee-length skirt is attached. This coat may be fashioned of velveteen; the sleeves should have large turn-back cuffs. Marlow's shoes can be made by fastening large buckles over the lacings in ordinary low-cut shoes. His hat should be a tricorne; it can be fashioned easily by turning up the sides and back of any wide-brimmed hat. Lace, braid trimmings, buttons, lace handkerchief, and gold-headed cane will add to the costume.

Hastings. This costume closely follows that of young Marlow. It is the same cut, but may differ in the color of waistcoat and breeches. Hastings' costume should not be so elaborately trimmed as that of Marlow.

Mr. Hardcastle. This costume represents the country gentleman rather than the town gentleman. Hardcastle's waistcoat and breeches may be of a somber color and of a material resembling wool rather than silk, velvet, or satin. Instead of lace at neck and cuffs he may wear a cravat or neckcloth (a piece of plain material folded and wrapped around the neck). He wears heavy woolen stockings. He may carry a snuffbox and a cane.

Tony Lumpkin. The same cut for waistcoat, breeches, and coat is used for Tony's costume, and his accessories are the same as for other male characters. Tony may accentuate his loud character by having bright breeches (red outing flannel), flowered waistcoat (drapery material), and buff coat (outing flannel or sateen).

The other characters, including Diggory and the rough fellows in the inn, may have variations on the colonial type

costume. Some may appear in waistcoat and breeches without the outer coat. Stingo may wear an apron, simply a square piece of rough cloth tied about his waist. Sir Charles is dressed in much the same manner as Marlow.

Remember, for all the characters, exaggeration in the amount of lace, the fullness of skirt, the ruffling, the trimming, and the general lines of the silhouette will add to the effect as the audience views the costumes.

MAKE-UP

Good wigs are the first consideration in the make-up for *She Stoops to Conquer*. The play is laid in the period when English society paid a great deal of attention to hairdress. If it is at all possible, wigs should be rented from a costume company.

The general characteristics for the hairdress for men were: hair brushed away from forehead, ending down the back in a cluster of curls, a pigtail, or a queue. Often the hair was dressed high in front, and a row or two of curls arranged over the ears. Of course, the whole was highly powdered.

The women went forth in the glory of towering masses of puffed hair and curls topped by various ornamentations, including such articles as fruit baskets, plumes, flower gardens, and miniature houses.

It may be possible to dress the hair of your characters with false hair, switches, and braids (obtained at a ten-cent store), if you are unable to rent wigs.

Steps for individual make-up:

Kate Hardcastle. Light juvenile foundation grease paint. Blue eye shadow on upper lids. Eyes enlarged with brown liner. Rouge and lipstick. Light powder over all, with perhaps addition of one or two small black patches on cheek and chin for beauty marks. Her hair should be a cluster of curls falling low on the neck, with perhaps curls around ears and on forehead. Leave the hair unpowdered.

Miss Neville. Same make-up as for Miss Hardcastle.

Mrs. Hardcastle. Try a putty nose on Mrs. Hardcastle to give a ridiculous effect. Take a small lump of putty and warm it in your hands until it is plastic. Apply it to the bridge of

the nose and the sides, leaving a bump on the end of the nose. Smooth it into the lines of the nose and pat the end into shape. The foundation color goes on neatly over putty, completely disguising the line between putty and actual flesh.

Middle-age foundation should be used for Mrs. Hardcastle. Plenty of blue eye shadow, eyes enlarged by drawing lines under and over lashes, a few wrinkle lines between eyes and around nose and mouth, definite spots of rouge, lipstick in an exaggerated line — all add to her make-up. A light powder over all, and black patches in star or triangle shape will complete her facial make-up. Mrs. Hardcastle's hairdress should be elaborate to the point of ludicrousness. If a wig is not obtainable, use plenty of false hair. Rolls of stuffing on top of the head, with the hair combed over them and piled high, will give the effect. Rolls of stiff curls at the sides and at the back should be used. The whole should be highly powdered; then, as the crowning effect, perhaps a miniature ship in full sail set atop the mass of hair!

Young Marlow. Deep pink or suntan juvenile foundation. This should give him sufficient color so that no lipstick or rouge need be used. The eyes may be accentuated with brown. If he does not wear a wig, the hair should be combed straight back, and neat curls all the way around with a cluster on the neck may be added. It may be powdered or left in natural color.

Hastings. This make-up is the same as for young Marlow except that the hair may be slightly different in arrangement. Instead of the "bob" wig, as described for Marlow, the hair may be brushed straight back, slightly puffed on top, and allowed to fall in curls at the neck. Here it is tied with a ribbon. Curls over the ears add to the effect.

Mr. Hardcastle. A deep suntan foundation grease paint will give Hardcastle the complexion of a ruddy country gentleman. He should have well-defined wrinkle lines about his eyes, on his forehead, around nose and mouth. Use fairly dark powder over all. Eyebrows should be filled with white grease paint, powdered and brushed backwards to give shaggy effect. His hair should be dressed to resemble a pompadour brushed straight back, puffed over ears and forehead, with straggling locks tied at the back of the neck.

SHE STOOPS
TO CONQUER

KATE



MAKE UP



MRS. HARDCASTLE

HARDCASTLE



TONY



MARLOWE



Sir Charles Marlow uses the same sort of make-up as *Hardcastle* but in a lighter shade. His hair is carefully dressed.

Tony Lumpkin. Use a very ruddy, almost red, foundation grease paint. Eyes may be accentuated in brown. Rouge can be applied to give him the apple-cheeked country bumpkin look. His hairdress resembles that of *Marlow* or *Hastings*. Use a suntan powder over make-up.

Diggory. This make-up somewhat resembles *Tony's*, but the mouth and cheeks may be touched up in exaggeration for comic effect. His hair should be straggly, and loosely tied at the nape of his neck.

Variations of straight and juvenile make-ups are used for the rest of the characters. Remember to use ruddy foundation and dark powder. Mix your colors to get the desired shades.

She Stoops to Conquer

CHARACTERS

Miss Hardcastle. Young, pretty, mischievous, and clever. She has a will of her own, usually gets what she wants, but is good-natured and possessed of a fine sense of humor.

Miss Neville. A rather demure, sweet, and pretty girl, who is more conservative than her mischievous cousin, Kate.

Mr. Hardcastle. A gruff, somewhat crude old fellow but kind-hearted. He enjoys retelling old tales and is a little tiresome, but he means well.

Mrs. Hardcastle. A very chattering, slightly silly, middle-aged woman who wants to look and act as if she were still a young girl. She is sharp-tongued and a bit unreasonable. She dotes on her dull-witted son, Tony, and to him, and to him only, is she indulgent.

Tony Lumpkin. A galloping, loud-talking, practical joker. Sometimes a ray of intelligence shows through his dumbness. Beneath his guffawing, awkward exterior is a kind heart.

Marlow. A handsome, charming young man who suffers extreme embarrassment and nervousness in the presence of all women except waitresses. His shyness becomes him.

Hastings. A pleasant, good-looking young man who is able to manage rather cleverly any situation in which he finds himself.

Diggory. An awkward, crude fellow who is slow to comprehend anything intelligent, but laughs loudest and longest at a poor joke.

<i>Thomas</i>	}	Dull-witted servants who carry themselves awkwardly and fail to show much expression on their blank faces.
<i>Roger</i>		
<i>Dick</i>		

<i>Twist</i>	}	Rough, loud-mouthed fellows, uncouth in manner and action.
<i>Slang</i>		
<i>Muggins</i>		
<i>Aminadab</i>		

Stingo. A red-faced landlord who is not too particular about his habits or the management of his inn.

Sir Charles. A dignified, kindly gentleman.

ACT I

- SCENE 1. The parlor of the Hardcastle mansion
SCENE 2. The inn, "The Three Pigeons"
SCENE 3. The parlor of the Hardcastle mansion

ACT II

- SCENE 1. The parlor of the Hardcastle mansion
SCENE 2. Same

ACT III

- SCENE 1. The garden of the Hardcastle mansion
SCENE 2. The parlor of the Hardcastle mansion

ACT I — SCENE I

The parlor of the Hardcastle mansion is a large, comfortably furnished, and elaborately decorated room. Right of center stands a large square or round table, slender-legged, carved, and with a piecrust or marble top. Four chairs, also slender-legged, perhaps suggesting the ladder-backed style, are placed, two on each side of the table. A fireplace stands center of the left wall. This should have an elaborate mantelpiece, on which stand brass, glass, or crystal ornamental objects. Down left of the fireplace is a winged upholstered chair, set at an angle toward the fireplace. Up right of the fireplace, facing it, is an armchair. On the back wall, on either side of the door opening, stand large sideboards or console tables, the leaf turned up against the wall. On these are placed brass candelabra and pieces of glass, silver, or brass — plates, vases, glasses, etc. On either side of the door opening are tall candelabra on standards. Ornate pictures may be hung on the walls. A painted screen may stand in the corner up left, and a musical instrument of the period may be placed in the corner up right.

At rise, enter MR. HARDCASTLE from R followed by MRS. HARDCASTLE.

MRS. HARD. [*complainingly*] I vow, Mr. Hardcastle, you're very particular. Is there a creature in the whole country, but ourselves, that does not take a trip to town now and then to rub off the rust a little? [*shaking at him the long handkerchief which she carries and uses to gesture with*] There's the two Miss Hoggs and our neighbor, Mrs. Grigsby, go to take a month's polishing every winter.

HARD. [*at center, turning*] Ay, and bring back vanity and affectation to last them a whole year. I wonder why London cannot keep its own fools at home. In my time, the follies of the town crept slowly among us, but now they travel faster than a stagecoach.

MRS. HARD. Ay, your times were fine times, indeed; you have been telling us of them for many a long year. [*looks around the room in disgust*] Here we live in an old rumbling mansion that looks for all the world like an inn, but that we

never see company. Our best visitors are old Mrs. Oddfish, the curate's wife, and little Cripplegate, the lame dancing-master; and all our entertainment your old stories of Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough. [*turning away, stamping foot*] I hate such old-fashioned trumpery!

HARD. And I love everything that's old: old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine; and, I believe, Dorothy, [*taking her shoulders and turning her around*] you'll own I have been pretty fond of an old wife.

MRS. HARD. [*pushing his hand away*] Lord, Mr. Hardcastle, you're forever at your Dorothys and your old wives. You may be a Darby, but I'll be no Joan, I promise you. [*turns and walks down R, tossing her head*] I'm not so old as you'd make me by more than one good year. Add twenty to twenty, and make money of that. [*She arranges her hair mincingly*].

HARD. [*walks down L, musing*] Let me see — twenty added to twenty makes just fifty and seven.

MRS. HARD. [*turning quickly and advancing on him angrily*] It's false, Mr. Hardcastle; I was but twenty when I had Tony by Mr. Lumpkin, my first husband; and he's not come to years of discretion yet.

HARD. Nor ever will, I dare answer for him. Ay, you have taught him finely.

MRS. HARD. No matter, Tony Lumpkin has a good fortune. My son is not to live by his learning. I don't think a boy wants much learning to spend fifteen hundred a year.

HARD. [*turning on her*] Learning! A mere composition of tricks and mischief!

MRS. HARD. Humor, my dear; nothing but humor. Come, Mr. Hardcastle, you must allow the boy a little humor.

HARD. [*walks away in disgust*] I'd sooner allow him a horse-pond! [*turning and shaking his finger in her face*] If burning the footmen's shoes, frightening the maids, worrying the kittens, be humor, he has it. [*He demonstrates by holding his wig to his head*]. It was but yesterday he fastened my wig to the back of my chair, and when I went to make a bow, [*makes a bow*] I popped my bald head into Mrs. Frizzle's face.

MRS. HARD. And am I to blame? The poor boy was always too sickly to do any good. A school would be his death. When

he comes to be a little stronger, who knows what a year or two's Latin may do for him?

HARD. Latin for him! A cat and a fiddle! No, no; the alehouse and the stable are the only schools he'll ever go to.

MRS. HARD. Well, we must not snub the poor boy now, for I believe we shan't have him long among us. [*dabs her eyes and nose superficially with handkerchief*] Anybody who looks in his face can see he's consumptive.

HARD. Ay, if growing too fat be one of the symptoms.

MRS. HARD. I'm actually afraid of his lungs.

HARD. [*C*] And truly, so am I; for he sometimes whoops like a speaking trumpet. [*A loud "whoop" is heard off stage R. HARDCASTLE moves to R and looks off*]. Oh, there he goes — a very consumptive figure, truly! [*TONY swaggers in from R, crossing to C, still whooping*].

MRS. HARD. [*running after him and stopping him*] Tony, where are you going, my charmer! Won't you give papa and I little of your company, lovee?

TONY. [*starting out L*] I'm in haste, mother; I can't stay.

MRS. HARD. [*catching his coat tail*] You shan't venture out this raw evening, my dear. You look most shocking.

TONY. [*slapping her hand off*] I can't stay, I tell you. The "Three Pigeons" expects me down every moment. There's some fun going forward.

HARD. [*at down R*] Ay; the alehouse, the old place. I thought so.

MRS. HARD. A low, paltry set of fellows!

TONY. Not so low, neither. There's Dick Muggins the exciseman, Jack Slang the horsedocter, little Aminadab that grinds the music box, and Tom Twist that spins the pewter platter.

MRS. HARD. [*putting her hand on his shoulder pleadingly*] Pray, my dear, disappoint them for one night at least.

TONY. As for disappointing them, I should not so much mind; [*takes her hand from his shoulder and drops it with a flourish*] but I can't abide to disappoint myself. [*He starts out L*].

MRS. HARD. [*catching hold of his coat tail*] You shan't go.

TONY. I will, I tell you. [*He starts out*].

MRS. HARD. [*pulling him back*] I say you shan't.

TONY. We'll see which is strongest, you or I. [*He starts off L with MRS. HARDCASTLE hanging to his coat tail and sliding along back of him. She cries, "Don't go, Tony, please, now Tony!" and he yells "Whoops!" as they exit L*].

HARD. [*crossing to C and looking after them*] Ay, there goes a pair that only spoil each other. [*comes down to footlights and talks directly to audience*] But is not the whole age in a combination to drive sense and discretion out-of-doors? There's my pretty darling, Kate; the fashions of the times have almost infected her too. By living a year or two in town, she is as fond of gauze and French frippery as the best of them.

[*MISS HARDCASTLE enters rear C, humming. HARDCASTLE turns to greet her*]. Blessings on my pretty innocence! Dressed out as usual, my Kate. Goodness! What a quantity of superfluous silk hast thou got about thee, girl! [*He pulls out a fold of her full skirt*].

MISS HARD. [*coming down C*] You know our agreement, sir. You allow me the morning to receive and pay visits, and to dress in my own manner; and in the evening I put on my housewife's dress to please you.

HARD. Well, remember I insist on the terms of our agreement; and, by-the-by, [*crosses and sits in chair down L of fireplace*] I believe I shall have occasion to try your obedience this very evening.

MISS HARD. [*crossing and standing at R of his chair*] I protest, sir, I don't comprehend your meaning.

HARD. Then, to be plain with you, Kate, I expect the young gentleman I have chosen to be your husband from town this very day. I have his father's letter, in which he informs me his son is set out, and that he intends to follow himself shortly after.

MISS HARD. [*turns away toward C*] Indeed! I wish I had known something of this before. Bless me, how shall I behave? It's a thousand to one I shan't like him; our meeting will be so formal and so like a thing of business, that I shall find no room for friendship or esteem.

HARD. Depend upon it, child, I'll never control your choice; but Mr. Marlow, whom I have pitched upon, is the son of my old friend, Sir Charles Marlow, of whom you have heard me

talk so often. The young gentleman has been bred a scholar, and is designed for an employment in the service of his country. I am told he's a man of an excellent understanding.

MISS HARD. [*turns halfway to him, slightly interested*] Is he?

HARD. Very generous.

MISS HARD. [*turns a little more*] I believe I shall like him.

HARD. Young and brave.

MISS HARD. [*turns and faces him*] I'm sure I shall like him.

HARD. And very handsome.

MISS HARD. [*runs to him*] My dear papa, say no more. [*kisses him on the head*] He's mine, I'll have him.

HARD. And to crown all, Kate, he's one of the most bashful and reserved young fellows in all the world.

MISS HARD. [*steps back in dismay*] You have frozen me to death again. That word *reserved* has undone all the rest of his accomplishments. A reserved lover, it is said, always makes a suspicious husband.

HARD. On the contrary, modesty seldom resides in a breast that is not enriched with nobler virtues. It was the very feature in his character that first struck me.

MISS HARD. [*shaking her finger at him*] He must have more striking features to catch me, I promise you. [*walks to center, becoming coy*] However, if he be so young, so handsome, and so everything, as you mention, I believe he'll do and I think I'll have him.

HARD. [*rising*] Ay, Kate, but there is still an obstacle. It's more than an even wager he may not have you.

MISS HARD. [*turns to him*] My dear papa, why will you mortify one so? [*walks down right, musing impudently*] Well, if he refuses, instead of breaking my heart at his indifference, I'll only break my glass for its flattery, set my cap to some newer fashion, and look out for some less difficult admirer.

HARD. [*crossing and patting her shoulder*] Bravely resolved! In the meantime, I'll go prepare the servants for his reception; [*points out rear C*] as we seldom see company, they want as much training as a company of recruits, the first day's muster. [*He exits rear C, sighing*].

MISS HARD. [*hurrying to C and facing the audience*] Lud, this news of papa's puts me all in a flutter! Young, handsome;

these he put last, but I put them foremost. Sensible, good-natured; I like all that. But, then, reserved and sheepish, that's much against him. Yet can't he be cured of his timidity, by being taught to be proud of his wife? Yes, and can't I — but I vow I am disposing of the husband before I have secured the lover. [*She runs to fireplace and looks in mirror over it, arranging her hair.* MISS NEVILLE *enters from R.* MISS HARDCASTLE *turns and runs to meet her at C*]. I'm glad you're come, my dear. Tell me, Constance, how do I look this evening? [*She turns about, smoothing her dress*]. Is there anything whimsical about me? Is it one of my well-looking days, child? Am I in face today?

MISS N. Perfectly, my dear. [*She stops and looks into MISS HARD.'s face*]. Yet now I look again — bless me! — sure no accident has happened among the canary birds or the gold fishes? Has your brother or the cat been meddling? Or has the last novel been too moving?

MISS HARD. [*in an excited tone*] No; nothing of all this. I have been threatened — I can scarce get it out — [*lowers her voice to an excited whisper*] I have been threatened with a lover. [*She giggles*].

MISS N. And his name —

MISS HARD. Is Marlow. [*She giggles again*].

MISS N. Indeed.

MISS HARD. [*triumphantly*] The son of Sir Charles Marlow.

MISS N. [*also excited*] As I live, the most intimate friend of Mr. Hastings, my admirer. They are never asunder. I believe you must have seen him when we lived in town.

MISS HARD. Never.

MISS N. [*seriously*] He's a very singular character, I assure you. Among women of reputation and virtue he is the modestest man alive; but his acquaintance gives him a very different character among creatures of another stamp. You understand me?

MISS HARD. [*walking down R in disgust*] An odd character, indeed. I shall never be able to manage him. What shall I do? Pshaw! think no more of him, but trust to occurrences for success. [*turns and comes back to CONSTANCE*] But how goes on your own affair, my dear? Has my mother been courting you for my brother Tony, as usual?

MISS N. [*turning R with a touch of sarcasm*] I have just come from one of our agreeable tête-à-têtes. She has been saying a hundred tender things, and setting off her pretty monster as the very pink of perfection.

MISS HARD. And her partiality is such that she actually thinks him so. A fortune like yours is no small temptation. Besides, as she has the whole management of it, I'm not surprised to see her unwilling to let it go out of the family.

MISS N. A fortune like mine, which chiefly consists in jewels, is no such mighty temptation. But at any rate, if my dear Hastings be but constant, I make no doubt to be too hard for her at last. [*turning to MISS HARD. with a mischievous laugh*] However, I let her suppose that I am in love with her son, and she never once dreams that my affections are fixed upon another.

MISS HARD. [*also laughing*] My good brother holds out stoutly. I could almost love him for hating you so.

MISS N. It is a good-natured creature at bottom, and I'm sure would wish to see me married to anybody but himself. [*Bell rings off R*]. But my aunt's bell rings for our afternoon's walk. Come! Courage is necessary, as our affairs are critical. [*She starts off R*].

MISS HARD. [*following her*] Would it were bedtime, and all were well!

CURTAIN

ACT I — SCENE 2

The scene is the reception room of the inn, "The Three Pigeons." At the left is an old counter-like table over which is a sign depicting the three pigeons — insignia of the inn. STINGO, the landlord, sits behind the desk, figuring. Near the center is a rude table and at the right is a great open fireplace. Around the table are some rough benches. There is a door down left.

As the curtain rises there is a great hullabaloo and music. TONY seated on the table swinging his legs. At the right of the table on the rough bench sit JACK SLANG and TOM TWIST. On the left side of the table sits DICK MUGGINS. All are pounding their ale mugs on the table

to the music of an old music box which AMINADAB, who stands C, is merrily grinding. An addition to the hilarity of the scene may be gained by having a dancing bear, someone dressed in a bear costume, who dances clumsily to the music, and at its end goes to lie under the table.

ALL. Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah, bravo!

MUGGINS. [*pounding on the table with his cup*] Now, gentlemen, silence for a song. The Squire [*bows low to TONY*] is going to knock himself down for a song.

ALL. Ay, a song, a song.

TONY. Then I'll sing you, gentlemen, a song I made upon this alehouse, "The Three Pigeons." [*TONY, with a great swagger, stands atop the table as the rest seat themselves. He sings lustily and with exaggerated gestures. His companions laugh boisterously at the lines of the song*].

Let schoolmasters puzzle their brain,
 With grammar, and nonsense, and learning;
 Good liquor, I stoutly maintain,
 Gives genius a better discerning.
 Let them brag of their heathenish gods,
 Their Lethes, their Styxes, and Stygians;
 Their quis, their quaes, and their quods,
 They're all but a parcel of pigeons.
Toroddle, toroddle, toroll!

When hypocrite preachers come down
 A-preaching that drinking is sinful,
 I'll wager the rascals a crown,
 They always preach best with a skinful.
 But when you come down with your pence,
 For a slice of such scurvy religion,
 I'll leave it to all men of sense,
 But you, my good friends, are the pigeons.
Toroddle, toroddle, toroll!

Then come, put the jorum about,
 And let us be merry and clever;
 Our hearts and our liquors are stout,
 Here's the "Three Jolly Pigeons" forever.

Let some cry up woodcock or hare,
Your bustards, your ducks, and your widgeons;
But of all the birds in the air,
Here's a health to the "Three Jolly Pigeons."
Toroddle, toroddle, toroll!

[*All shout "Bravo" as TONY sits again on the edge of the table*].

SLANG. [*slapping TONY on the back*] The Squire has got spunk in him.

TWIST. [*soulfully*] I loves to hear him sing, bekase he never gives us nothing that's low.

MUGGINS. The genteel thing is the genteel thing, a'ter all. If so be that a gentleman bees in a concatenation accordingly.

AMINADAB. I like the maxim of it, Master Muggins. What though I am obligated to dance a bear, a man may be a gentleman for all that. May this be my poison if my bear ever dances but to the very genteelest of tunes, — "Water Parted from the Sea," the minuet in "Ariadne," or "Come Tickle My Nose with a Barley Straw."

SLANG. What a pity it is the Squire is not come to his own! It would be well for all the publicans within ten miles round of him.

TONY. Ecod, and so it would, Master Slang. I'd then show what it was to keep choice of company.

AMINADAB. Oh, he takes after his own father for that. To be sure, old Squire Lumpkin was the finest gentleman I ever set my eyes on. [*Voices are heard outside, and STINGO rises from behind the counter and goes out the door L*]. It was a saying in the place, that he kept the best horses, dogs, and girls in the whole country.

TONY. Ecod, and when I'm of age I'll be no paltry fellow, I promise you. I have been thinking of Bet Bouncer and the miller's gray mare to begin with. But come, my boys, drink a bout and be merry, for you pay no reckoning. [*STINGO re-enters from L. TONY jumps from the table and crosses to him*]. Well, Stingo, what's the matter?

STINGO. There be two gentlemen in a post-chaise at the door. They have lost their way upo' the forest, and they are talking something about Mr. Hardcastle.

TONY. [*slapping his leg*] As sure as can be, one of them must be the gentleman that's coming down to court my sister. Then desire them to step this way, and I'll set them right in a twinkling. [*STINGO goes out L and TONY turns to his companions at the table*]. Gentlemen, as they mayn't be good enough company for you, keep your seats for a moment, and I'll be with you in the squeezing of a lemon. [*comes down and talks to audience*] Father-in-law has been calling me whelp and hound this half year. Now if I pleased, I could be so revenged upon the old grumbletonian. But then, I'm afraid — afraid of what? I shall soon be worth fifteen hundred a year, and let him frighten me out of that if he can.

[*STINGO enters followed by MARLOW and HASTINGS. TONY draws STINGO a little RC and talks in an undertone to him. MARLOW and HASTINGS are speaking together at the door L*].

MAR. What a tedious, uncomfortable day have we had of it! We were told it was but forty miles across the country, and we have come about three score.

HAST. And all, Marlow, from that unaccountable reserve of yours, that would not let us inquire more frequently on the way.

MAR. I own, Hastings, I am unwilling to lay myself under an obligation to everyone I meet; and often stand the chance of an unmannerly answer.

HAST. At present, however, we are not likely to receive any answer. [*He points to the rest of the men in the room who are whispering among themselves, except TONY who stands at RC teetering on his heels; STINGO has gone back to his seat behind the counter*].

TONY. [*swaggering toward them a few steps*] No offence, gentlemen. But I'm told you have been inquiring for one Mr. Hardcastle, in these parts. Do you know what part of the country you are in?

HAST. [*crossing to C to meet him*] Not in the least, sir, but should thank you for information.

TONY. Nor the way you came?

HAST. No, sir; but if you can inform us —

TONY. Why, gentlemen, if you know neither the road you are going, nor where you are, nor the road you came, the first thing I have to inform you is, that [*He pauses and elaborately*

brushes a supposed speck from his boot. The men at the table lean forward and take a great interest in the scene, punching each other now and then in glee]. — you have lost your way.

MAR. [*crossing to stand by HASTINGS*] We wanted no information of that, sir.

TONY. Pray, gentlemen, may I be so bold as to ask the place from whence you came?

MAR. That's not necessary towards directing us where we are to go.

TONY. No offence; but question for question is all fair, you know. Pray, gentlemen, is not this same Hardcastle a cross-grained, old-fashioned, whimsical fellow, with an ugly face, a daughter, and a pretty son?

HAST. We have not seen the gentleman, but he has the family you mention.

TONY. [*describing her with his hands, making a wry face*] The daughter, a tall, trapesing, trolloping, talkative maypole; the son, a pretty, well-bred, agreeable youth, that everybody is fond of?

MAR. Our information differs in this. The daughter is said to be well-bred and beautiful; the son, an awkward booby, reared up and spoiled at his mother's apron strings.

TONY. [*as his table companions chuckle in merriment*] He-he-hem! Then, gentlemen, all I have to tell you is, that you won't reach Mr. Hardcastle's house this night, I believe.

HAST. Unfortunate!

TONY. It's a long, dark, boggy, dirty, dangerous way. Stingo, tell the gentlemen the way to Mr. Hardcastle's. [*STINGO comes down L and TONY winks broadly at him*]. Mr. Hardcastle's of Quagmire Marsh, you know.

STINGO. Master Hardcastle's! Lack-a-daisy, my masters, you're come a deadly deal wrong! When you came to the bottom of the hill, you should have crossed down Squash-lane.

MAR. Cross down Squash-lane!

[*MARLOW and HASTINGS now stand C with TONY at the R of them and STINGO on the L. As the conversation proceeds they turn from STINGO to TONY*].

STINGO. Then you were to keep straight forward, till you

came to where four roads meet! [*He points to a far-off point in the distance*].

MAR. Come to where four roads meet!

TONY. Ay; but you must be sure to take only one of them.

HAST. Oh!

TONY. At a time.

MAR. Oh, sir, you're facetious.

TONY. [*demonstrating the directions with many great flourishes and pointings and turnings, so elaborate that no one could follow him*] Then keeping to the right, you are to go sideways till you come upon Crackskull Common; there you must look sharp for the track of the wheel, and go forward till you come to Farmer Murrain's barn. Coming to the farmer's barn, you are to turn to the right, and then to the left, and then to the right about again, till you find out the old mill —

MAR. Zounds, man! We could as soon find out the longitude!

HAST. [*in a low, worried tone to MARLOW*] What's to be done, Marlow?

MAR. [*looking distastefully about*] This house promises but a poor reception; [*suddenly looks at STINGO*] though perhaps the landlord can accommodate us.

STINGO. Alack, master, we have but one spare bed in the whole house —

TONY. [*hastily interrupting*] And to my knowledge that's taken up by three lodgers already, besides the man in the parlor waiting for a chance. [*after a pause, in which the rest seem disconcerted*] I have hit it. Don't you think, Stingo, our landlady could accommodate the gentlemen by the fireside, with — three chairs and a bolster?

HAST. I hate sleeping by the fireside. [*He crosses to door L*].

MAR. And I detest your three chairs and a bolster. [*He follows HASTINGS*].

TONY. [*hurrying after them, leaving STINGO alone at C*] You do, do you? Then let me see — what if you go on a mile farther to the Buck's Head — the old Buck's Head on the hill — one of the best inns in the whole county?

HAST. Oh, ho! so we escaped an adventure for this night, however.

STINGO. [*coming to TONY and plucking his sleeve, speaks in a*

loud whisper] Sure, you can't be sending them to your father's as an inn, be you?

TONY. [*turning on him*] Mum, you fool, you! Let them find that out. [*to them*] You have only to keep on straight forward, till you come to a large old house by the roadside. You'll see a pair of large horns over the door. That's the sign. Drive up the yard, and call stoutly about you.

HAST. [*bowing*] Sir, we are obliged to you. The servants can't miss the way?

TONY. [*mimicking HASTINGS' bow*] No, no. But I tell you, though — the landlord is rich and going to leave off business; so he wants to be thought a gentleman, saving your presence, he! he! he! He'll be for giving you his company. [*The men at the table double up with silent laughter*].

STINGO. A troublesome old blade, to be sure; but he keeps as good wines and beds as any in the whole county. [*He turns away and his shoulders shake with mirth*].

MAR. Well, if he supplies us with these, we shall want no further connection. [*turning as he follows HASTINGS out the door*] We are to turn to the right, did you say?

TONY. [*quickly stifling his laughter*] No, no; straight forward. [*MARLOW and HASTINGS exit*].

[*TONY goes to the door and calls after them*]. I'll just step myself, and show you a piece of the way. [*turning warningly to STINGO and the rest*] Mum! [*TONY bursts into a loud "Whoop!" and exits as the men at the table and STINGO let go their laughter*].

CURTAIN

ACT I — SCENE 3

The parlor of the Hardcastle mansion. As the curtain rises HARDCASTLE is standing a little right center. Lined up before him are THOMAS, up center, then ROGER, then DICK, and finally DIGGORY, who stands a little left center. They stand awkwardly, staring dumbly at HARDCASTLE.

HARD. Well, I hope you are perfect in the table exercise I have been teaching you these three days. You all know your

posts and your places, and can show that you have been used to good company without stirring from home.

ALL. [*first one, then the other answers unconvincingly*] Ay, ay.

HARD. When company comes, you are not to pop out and stare, [*He demonstrates*] and then run in again, like frightened rabbits in a warren.

ALL. No, no. [*DIGGORY stands with his hands stiffly at his sides, the thumbs turned out. ROGER has hands in his pockets, and DICK is scratching his head*].

HARD. You, Diggory, whom I have taken from the barn, are to make a show at the side-table; and you, Roger, whom I have advanced from the plough, are to place yourself behind my chair. But you're not to stand so, with your hands in your pockets. Take your hands from your pockets, Roger, [*ROGER does so quickly*] and from your head, you blockhead, you. [*DICK gives a final scratch, grins sheepishly, and takes his hand from his head*]. See how Diggory carries his hands. [*They bend around to stare at DIGGORY, then try to imitate his stiffly held hands*]. They're a little too stiff, indeed, but that's no great matter.

DIG. [*grinning delightedly*] Ay, mind how I hold them; I learned to hold my hands this way when I was upon drill for the militia. And so, being upon drill —

HARD. You must not be so talkative, Diggory. You must be all attention to the guests; you must hear us talk and not think of talking; you must see us drink and not think of drinking; you must see us eat, and not think of eating.

DIG. By the laws, your worship, that's perfectly impossible. Whenever Diggory sees eating going forwards, ecod, he's always wishing for a mouthful himself. [*He breaks into a guffaw which HARDCASTLE cuts short*].

HARD. Blockhead! Is not a bellyful in the kitchen as good as a bellyful in the parlor? Stay your stomach with that reflection.

DIG. Ecod, I thank your worship, I'll make a shift to stay my stomach with a slice of cold beef in the pantry.

HARD. Diggory, you are too talkative. Then, if I happen to say a good thing, or tell a good story at table, you must not all burst out a-laughing, as if you made part of the company.

DIG. Ecod, your worship must not tell the story of Old

Grouse in the gun-room; I can't help laughing at that — [*He doubles up with loud guffawing*] — He! he! he! — for the soul of me. We have laughed at that these twenty years — ha! ha! ha!

HARD. [*pleased*] Ha! ha! ha! The story is a good one. Well, honest Diggory, you may laugh at that — but still remember to be attentive. Suppose one of the company should call for a glass of wine, how will you behave? [*He assumes an air and orders DIGGORY*]. A glass of wine, sir, if you please. [*as DIGGORY stands stock still, staring dumbly*] Eh, why don't you move?

DIG. Ecod, your worship, I never have courage till I see the eatables and drinkables brought upon the table, and then I'm as bould as a lion. [*He guffaws again*].

HARD. What, will nobody move?

DIG. I'm not to leave this place.

ROGER. I'm sure it's no place of mine.

DICK. No mine, for sartain.

THOMAS. Wouns! And I'm sure it canna be mine.

HARD. You numbskulls! And so, while, like your betters, you are quarreling for places, the guests must be starved? Oh, you dunces! I find I must begin all over again. [*noise off stage*] But don't I hear a coach drive into the yard? To your posts, you blockheads! I'll go, in the meantime, and give my old friend's son a hearty welcome at the gate. [*He exits down R*].

[*The servants move about the room bumping into each other*].

DIG. Wouns! My place is gone clean out of my head.

ROGER. I know that my place is everywhere.

DICK. Where the devil is mine?

DIG. My place is to be nowhere at all; so I'ze go about my business. [*They exit rear C in a hurry, all except DIGGORY who goes to door down R and bows stiffly as MARLOW enters followed by HASTINGS*].

DIG. Welcome, gentlemen, welcome.

HAST. [*walking past DIGGORY without a glance and crossing to MARLOW, who has moved down L and stands looking about the room*] After the disappointments of the day, welcome once more, Charles, to the comforts of a clean room and a good fire. Upon my word, a very well-looking house; antique, but

creditable. [*In looking around the room carelessly he sees DIGGORY still standing down right. He gives him a look and DIGGORY lets out a weak, embarrassed guffaw and scuttles out rear C*].

MAR. The usual fate of a large mansion. Having first ruined the master by good housekeeping, it at last comes to levy contributions as an inn.

HAST. As you say, we passengers are to be taxed to pay all these fineries. I have often seen a good sideboard, or a marble chimneypiece, though not actually put in the account, inflame the bill confoundedly.

MAR. Travelers, George, must pay in all places. The only difference is, that in good inns you pay dearly for luxuries; in bad inns you are fleeced and starved. [*MARLOW sits in chair at down L of fireplace; HASTINGS in chair up R of fireplace*].

HAST. You have lived pretty much among them. In truth, I have been so often surprised that you, who have seen so much of the world, with your natural good sense and your many opportunities, could never yet acquire a requisite share of assurance.

MAR. The Englishman's malady. But tell me, George, where could I have learned that assurance you talk of? My life has been chiefly spent in a college or an inn, in seclusion from that lovely part of the creation that chiefly teach men confidence. I don't know that I was ever familiarly acquainted with a single modest woman except my mother.

HAST. In the company of women of reputation I never saw such an idiot, such a trembler; you look for all the world as if you wanted an opportunity of stealing out of the room.

MAR. Why, man, that's because I do want to steal out of the room. Faith, I have often formed a resolution to break the ice, and rattle away at any rate.

HAST. If you could but say half the fine things to them that I have heard you lavish upon the barmaid of an inn —

MAR. [*rising and walking to C nervously*] Why, George, I can't say fine things to them. They freeze, they petrify me. They may talk of a comet, or a burning mountain, or some such bagatelle; but to me a modest woman, dressed out in all her finery, is the most tremendous object of the whole creation.

HAST. Ha! ha! ha! At this rate, man, how can you ever expect to marry?

MAR. [*gloomily*] Never, unless, as among kings and princes, my bride were to be courted by proxy. If, indeed, like an Eastern bridegroom, one were to be introduced to a wife he never saw before, it might be endured. [*turning to HASTINGS*] But to go through all the terrors of a formal courtship, together with the episode of aunts, grandmothers, and cousins, and at last to blurt out the broad, staring question of — “Madam, will you marry me?” [*walking to RC*] — no, no, that’s a strain much above me, I assure you.

HAST. I pity you! But how do you intend behaving to the lady you are come down to visit at the request of your father?

MAR. [*turning and illustrating*] As I behave to all other ladies. Bow very low — answer yes or no to all her demands. But for the rest, I don’t think I shall venture to look in her face till I see my father’s again.

HAST. [*rises; crosses and puts his hand on MARLOW’s shoulder*] I’m surprised that one who is so warm a friend can be so cool a lover.

MAR. To be explicit, my dear Hastings, my chief inducement down was to be instrumental in forwarding your happiness, not my own. Miss Neville loves you; the family don’t know you; as my friend, you are sure of a reception, and let honor do the rest.

HAST. My dear Marlow! But I’ll suppress the emotion. Were I a wretch, meanly seeking to carry off a fortune, you should be the last man in the world I would apply to for assistance. But Miss Neville’s person is all I ask, and that is mine, both from her deceased father’s consent, and her own inclination.

MAR. Happy man! You have talents and art to captivate any woman. [*turns away woefully*] I’m doomed to adore the sex, and yet to converse with the only part of it I despise.

[HARDCASTLE and DIGGORY are heard off stage — HARDCASTLE yelling “Diggory, you blockhead, come here!” DIGGORY answers “Coming, sir!”]

MAR. Pshaw! This fellow here to interrupt us.

[MARLOW and HASTINGS move down L as HARDCASTLE enters]

rear C, followed by DIGGORY. *HARDCASTLE, beaming, crosses to the young men; DIGGORY stands stiffly at R of door rear C*].

HARD. Gentlemen, once more you are heartily welcome. Which is Mr. Marlow? [*Marlow bows slightly. HARDCASTLE slaps him on the back. MARLOW and HASTINGS link arms and walk toward down R ignoring HARDCASTLE who follows them, talking at a great rate*]. Sir, you're heartily welcome. It's not my way, you see, to receive my friends with my back to the fire; I like to give them a hearty reception in the old style at my gate; I like to see their horses and trunks taken care of.

MAR. He has got our names from the servants already. [*They turn and MARLOW addresses HARDCASTLE briefly, then pushing him out of the way they cross to down L talking together*]. We approve your caution and hospitality, sir. [*to HASTINGS*] I have been thinking, George, of changing our traveling dresses in the morning; I am grown confoundedly ashamed of mine.

HARD. [*not to be daunted, hurries after them*] I beg, Mr. Marlow, you'll use no ceremony in this house. [*He comes in front of them*].

HAST. [*turns with MARLOW and they cross down R again, ignoring HARDCASTLE*] I fancy, Charles, you're right; the first blow is half the battle. I intend opening the campaign with white and gold.

HARD. [*running around and getting in front of them*] Mr. Marlow — Mr. Hastings — gentlemen — pray be under no restraint in this house. This is Liberty-hall, gentlemen; you may do just as you please here.

MAR. [*paying no attention to HARDCASTLE, they turn and pace back towards down L*] Yet, George, if we open the campaign too fiercely at first, we may want ammunition before it is over. I think to reserve the embroidery to secure a retreat. What do you think of the brown and gold? [*They pause at C and HARDCASTLE crowds in between them*].

HARD. Your talking of a retreat, Mr. Marlow, puts me in mind of the Duke of Marlborough, when he went to besiege Denain. He first summoned the garrison —

MAR. Do you think the yellow waistcoat will do with the plain brown?

HARD. He first summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men —

HAST. [*They pretend to ignore* *HARDCASTLE*]. I don't know — brown and yellow mix poorly.

HARD. I say, gentlemen, as I was telling you, he summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men —

MAR. The girls like finery.

HARD. Which might consist of about five thousand men, well appointed with stores, ammunition, and other implements of war. [*getting very dramatic*] "Now," says the Duke of Marlborough to George Brooks, that stood next to him — you must have heard of George Brooks — "I'll pawn my dukedom," says he, "but I take that garrison without spilling a drop of blood." So —

MAR. [*interrupting* *HARDCASTLE*] What, my good friend, if you give us a glass of punch in the meantime? It would help us to carry on the siege with vigor.

HARD. Punch, sir? [*aside*] This is the strangest sort of modesty I ever met with.

MAR. Yes, sir, punch. A glass of warm punch, after our journey, will be comfortable. This is Liberty-hall, you know.

[*DIGGORY, who has been standing beside the door rear C, comes forward and gets cup of punch from the table R*].

DIG. Here's a cup, your worship.

HARD. Here's a cup, sir. [*HARDCASTLE crosses to get it*].

MAR. [*aside*] So this fellow, in his Liberty-hall, will only let us have just what he pleases.

DIG. [*aside to* *HARDCASTLE*] Did you tell them Old Grouse in the gun-room?

HARD. No.

DIG. Tell it! tell it! [*DIGGORY exits rear C, doubling up with laughter*].

HARD. [*returning to* *MARLOW* *and* *HASTINGS, hands the cup to* *MARLOW*] I hope you'll find it to your mind. I have prepared it with my own hands, and I believe you'll own the ingredients are tolerable. Will you be so good as to pledge me, sir?

[*HARDCASTLE goes to the table and brings a chair down C and is about to sit when* *MARLOW* *nonchalantly takes it from him and seats himself. A bit nonplussed, HARDCASTLE goes for the second chair, but* *HASTINGS takes it from him, brings it down and sits on the L of* *MARLOW. HARDCASTLE laughs as if it were all a good joke, then goes and*

brings third chair from table and tries to crowd it between them. He finally squeezes in as MARLOW passes the cup across him to HASTINGS].

MAR. Sir, my service to you. [*HASTINGS drinks and passes it back to MARLOW. HARDCASTLE grabs at it as it goes by but they ignore him. This happens twice and finally HARDCASTLE grabs the cup*].

HARD. [*He is about to drink when MARLOW nonchalantly takes the cup from him*]. Mr. Marlow, here's to our better acquaintance.

MAR. [*aside*] A very impudent fellow, this! But he's a character, and I'll humor him a little. [*He drinks*].

HAST. [*aside*] I see this fellow wants to give us his company, and forgets that he's an innkeeper before he has learned to be a gentleman.

MAR. [*to HARDCASTLE*] From the excellence of your cup, my old friend, I suppose you have a good deal of business in this part of the country. Warm work, now and then, at elections, I suppose?

HARD. [*pleased to be noticed at last*] No, sir; I have long given that work over.

HAST. So, then you have no turn for politics, I find?

HARD. [*settling himself for a good talk*] Why, no, sir; there was a time, indeed, when I fretted myself about the mistakes of government, like other people; but finding myself every day grow more angry, and the government no better, I left it to mend itself. Sir, my service to you. [*He reaches for the cup but MARLOW takes no notice of the action and drinks himself*].

MAR. [*after drinking*] And you have an argument in your cup, old gentleman, better than any in Westminster Hall.

HARD. Ay, young gentleman, that, and a little philosophy.

MAR. [*aside*] Well, this is the first time I ever heard of an innkeeper's philosophy. [*MARLOW hands the cup across to HASTINGS but HARDCASTLE grabs at it, so MARLOW withdraws it and passes it behind the chair to HASTINGS. HARDCASTLE watches it woefully*].

HAST. [*taking the cup*] So then, like an experienced general, you attack them on every quarter. If you find their reason manageable, you attack it with your philosophy; if you find they have no reason, you attack them with this. Here's your health, my philosopher.

[*He takes a long drink, tipping the cup to drain; then hands it to* **HARDCASTLE**. **HARDCASTLE** *starts to drink, sees it is empty, turns it upside down mournfully. He looks from* **HASTINGS** *to* **MARLOW**, *then laughs halfheartedly as if it were a good joke*].

HARD. Good, very good, thank you; ha! ha! Your generalship puts me in mind of Prince Eugene, when he fought the Turks at the battle of Belgrade. You shall hear. [*He settles back to launch into the story but* **MARLOW** *and* **HASTINGS** *rise and replace their chairs at the table down R*].

MAR. Instead of the battle of Belgrade, I think it's almost time to talk about supper. What has your philosophy got in the house for supper?

HARD. For supper, sir? [*to the audience*] Was ever such a request made to a man in his own house?

MAR. Yes, sir, supper, sir. I begin to feel an appetite. I shall make devilish work to-night in the larder, I promise you.

HARD. [*indignantly to the audience*] Such a brazen dog sure never my eyes beheld. [*crossing to* **MARLOW** *and* **HASTINGS**, *who are standing in front of the table down R*] Why, really, sir, as for supper, I can't well tell. My Dorothy and the cook-maid settle these things between them. I leave these kind of things entirely to them.

MAR. You do, do you?

HARD. Entirely. By-the-by, I believe they are in actual consultation upon what's for supper this moment in the kitchen.

MAR. Then I beg they'll admit me as one of their privy council. It's a way I have got. When I travel I always choose to regulate my own supper. Let the cook be called. No offence, I hope, sir?

HARD. Oh, no, sir, none in the least — yet I don't know how; our Bridget, the cook-maid, is not very communicative upon these occasions. Should we send for her, she might scold us all out of the house.

HAST. Let's see the list of the larder, then. I ask it as a favor. I always match my appetite to my bill of fare.

MAR. [*to* **HARDCASTLE** *who has stepped back in amazement*] Sir, he's very right, and it's my way too.

HARD. Sir, you have a right to command here. [*He motions to* **DIGGORY** *who comes up from his post*]. Here, Diggory,

the bill of fare for to-night's supper. I believe it's drawn out. [DIGGORY gets list from sideboard up R]. Your manner, Mr. Hastings, puts me in mind of my uncle, Colonel Gunthorp. It was a saying of his, that no man was sure of his supper till he had eaten it.

DIG. [*aside to* HARDCASTLE] Did you tell about Old Grouse?

HARD. No, no. [*He takes bill of fare*].

DIG. [*snickering*] Tell 'em. [DIGGORY returns to his place by the door].

HAST. [*aside*] All upon the high ropes! His uncle a colonel — we shall soon hear of his mother being a justice of the peace. [*to* HARDCASTLE] But let's hear the bill of fare. [HARDCASTLE is about to read it when MARLOW takes it from him].

MAR. [*perusing*] What's here? For the first course, for the second course, for the dessert. The devil, sir, do you think we have brought down the whole Joiners' Company, or the Corporation of Bedford? Two or three little things, clean and comfortable, will do.

HAST. But let's hear it.

MAR. [*reading*] For the first course at the top, a pig's face and prune sauce.

HAST. Bother your pig, I say.

MAR. Bother your prune sauce, say I.

HARD. [*aside*] And bother your finicky stomach, say I. [*to them*] And yet, gentlemen, to men that are hungry, pig with prune sauce is very good eating.

MAR. [*reading*] Item; a calf's head and brains.

HAST. Oh, knock out your brains; I don't like 'em.

MAR. Let them be laid on a plate by themselves. I do.

HARD. [*aside*] Would your brains were knocked out! [*aloud*] But, gentlemen, you are my guests; make what alterations you please. Is there anything else you wish to retrench or alter, gentlemen?

MAR. [*reading*] Item; a pork pie and boiled rabbit and sausages, a florentine, a shaking pudding, and a dish of tiftaferty cream. Why, really, sir, your bill of fare is so exquisite that any one part of it is full as good as another. Send us what you please. So much for supper. And now to see that our beds are aired, and luggage properly taken care of.

HARD. I entreat you'll leave all that to me. You shall not stir a step.

MAR. Leave that to you! I protest, sir, you must excuse me; I always look to these things myself.

HARD. I must insist, sir, you'll make yourself easy on that head. [*He goes to rear C door*].

MAR. [*crossing to door, pushing HARDCASTLE aside*] You see I'm resolved on it. A very troublesome fellow this, as ever I met with. [*MARLOW exits*].

HARD. [*aside*] This may be modern modesty, but drat me if I ever saw anything look so like old-fashioned impudence. [*He exits after MARLOW, DIGGORY following*].

HAST. [*alone, crosses to C*] So, I find this fellow's civilities begin to grow troublesome. [*He takes the chair left at C by HARDCASTLE and puts it back at table*]. But who can be angry at those assiduities which are meant to please him? [*looks off R*] Ha! what do I see? Miss Neville, by all that's happy!

MISS N. [*entering from R*] My dear Hastings! To what unexpected good fortune, to what accident, am I to ascribe this happy meeting? [*She curtsies*].

HAST. [*crosses to her and takes her hands*] Let me ask the same question, as I could never have hoped to meet my dearest Constance at an inn.

MISS N. An inn! You mistake; my aunt, my guardian, lives here. What could induce you to think this house an inn?

HAST. My friend, Mr. Marlow, with whom I came down, and I, have been sent here as to an inn, I assure you. A young fellow, whom we accidentally met at a house hard by, directed us hither.

MISS N. Certainly it must be one of my hopeful cousin's tricks, of whom you have heard me talk so often.

HAST. He whom your aunt intends for you? He of whom I have such just apprehensions?

MISS N. You have nothing to fear from him, I assure you. You'd adore him if you knew how heartily he despises me. My aunt knows it too, and has undertaken to court me for him, and actually begins to think she has made a conquest. [*They laugh merrily*].

HAST. [*taking her hands again*] You must know, my Con-

stance, I have just seized this happy opportunity of my friend's visit here to get admittance into the family. The horses that carried us down are now fatigued with the journey, but they'll soon be refreshed; and then, if my dearest girl will trust to her faithful Hastings, we shall soon be out of their power.

MISS N. I have often told you that, though ready to obey you, I yet should leave my little fortune behind with reluctance. The greatest part of it was left me by my uncle, the India director, and chiefly consists of jewels. I have been for some time persuading my aunt to let me wear them. I fancy I'm very near succeeding. The instant they are put into my possession you shall find me ready to make them and myself yours.

HAST. Perish the baubles! Your person is all I desire. In the meantime, my friend Marlow must not be let into his mistake. I know the strange reserve of his temper is such, that if abruptly informed of it, he would instantly quit the house before our plan was ripe for execution.

MISS N. But how shall we keep him in the deception? Miss Hardcastle is just returned from walking; what if we persuade him she has come to this house as an inn? Come this way. [*They move up L and converse in undertones*].

MAR. [*enters from rear C, comes down and speaks to audience*] The assiduities of these good people tease me beyond bearing. My host seems to think it ill manners to leave me alone, and so he claps not only himself but his old-fashioned wife on my back. They talk of coming to sup with us too; and then, I suppose, we are to run the gauntlet through all the rest of the family. [*HASTINGS coughs and MARLOW turns around and sees him and MISS NEVILLE*]. What have we got here? [*On seeing MISS NEVILLE, he becomes panic-stricken and starts to rush off R but HASTINGS runs after him and catches him by the arm*].

HAST. My dear Charles! Let me congratulate you — the most fortunate accident! Who do you think is just alighted?

MAR. [*face turned away, in extreme embarrassment*] Cannot guess.

HAST. Our mistresses, boy; Miss Hardcastle and Miss Neville. Give me leave to introduce Miss Constance Neville to your acquaintance. [*MISS NEVILLE crosses; MARLOW bows*

stiffly in the opposite direction without glancing at her]. Happening to dine in the neighborhood, they called on their return to take fresh horses here. Miss Hardcastle has just stepped into the next room, and will be back in an instant. Wasn't it lucky, eh?

MAR. [*aside*] I have just been mortified enough of all conscience, and here comes something to complete my embarrassment.

HAST. Well, but wasn't it the most fortunate thing in the world?

MAR. [*glumly, trying to edge off R*] Oh, yes, very fortunate — a most joyful encounter! But our dresses, George, you know, are in disorder. What if we should postpone the happiness till tomorrow? Tomorrow at her own house? It will be every bit as convenient, and rather more respectful. Tomorrow let it be. [*He starts to go hurriedly but HASTINGS steps between him and the door R*].

MISS N. By no means, sir. Your ceremony will displease her. The disorder of your dress will show the ardor of your impatience. Besides, she knows you are in the house, and will permit you to see her. [*MISS NEVILLE crosses behind MARLOW to stand by HASTINGS*].

MAR. [*aside, facing front, never daring to look at MISS NEVILLE*] Oh, the devil she will! How shall I support it? [*plucking frantically in HASTINGS' direction, still staring face forward*] Hem! Hem! Hastings, you must not go. You are to assist me, you know. I shall be confoundedly ridiculous.

HAST. Pshaw, man! it's but the first plunge, and all's over. She's but a woman, you know.

MAR. And of all women, she that I most dread to encounter. [*MISS HARDCASTLE is heard off stage humming, MARLOW utters a frightened "Oh," and hurries across to down L*].

[*MISS HARDCASTLE enters from rear C. HASTINGS goes to meet her, greets her, and brings her down C. She wears a bonnet and carries a fan*].

HAST. Miss Hardcastle, Mr. Marlow. [*crosses to L and pulls MARLOW toward C*] I'm proud of bringing two persons of such merit together, that only want to know, to esteem each other. [*HASTINGS stands next to MARLOW down C, then MISS HARDCASTLE, then MISS NEVILLE*].

MISS HARD. [*aside*] Now for meeting my modest gentleman. [*after a pause, in which he appears very uneasy and disconcerted*] I'm glad of your safe arrival, sir. I'm told you had some accidents by the way.

MAR. [*not looking at her, shifts nervously*] Only a few, madam. Yes, we had some. Yes, madam, a good many accidents, but should be sorry, madam — or rather, glad of any accidents — that are so agreeably concluded. Hem!

HAST. [*in a low tone, punching MARLOW*] You never spoke better in your whole life. Keep it up, and I'll insure you the victory.

MISS HARD. I'm afraid you flatter, sir. You that have seen so much of the finest company can find little entertainment in an obscure corner of the country.

MAR. [*gathers courage and turns to her. He takes one look at her feet and stops dead*]. I have lived —

HAST. [*interrupting*] Ahem!

MAR. [*turning away nervously*] Well, George, I have lived in the world, but I have kept little company. I have been an observer upon life, madam, while others were enjoying it.

HAST. [*aside to MARLOW*] Cicero never spoke better. Once more, and you are confirmed in assurance forever.

MAR. [*aside to HASTINGS*] Hem! Stand by me then, and when I'm down throw in a word or two to set me up again.

MISS HARD. An observer, like you, upon life, were, I fear, disagreeably employed, since you must have had much more to censure than to approve.

MAR. [*still turned away*] Pardon me, madam, I was always willing to be amused. The folly of most people is rather an object of mirth than uneasiness.

HAST. [*aside to MARLOW*] Bravo, bravo! Never spoke so well in your whole life. [*aloud*] Well, Miss Hardcastle, I see that you and Mr. Marlow are going to be very good company. I believe our being here will but embarrass the interview. [*He crosses to stand beside MISS NEVILLE*].

MAR. [*not knowing HASTINGS has moved, he reaches behind him and begins to pluck frantically. He gets MISS HARDCASTLE'S gown instead of HASTINGS' coat*] Not in the least, Mr. Hastings. We like your company of all things. [*aside to HASTINGS*] Zounds,

George! [*He turns, discovers his mistake, and utters a frightened "Oh," as he bows and stammers in confusion. HASTINGS and MISS NEVILLE, laughing, exit R. MARLOW turns away again*]. What the devil shall I do? [*He looks about in despair. He sees the armchair up R of fireplace and pounces upon it*]. Will you please be seated, madam? [*He pulls the chair forward and seats himself. MISS HARDCASTLE stands smiling. He finally looks up, sees her standing, and with an embarrassed "Oh" jumps up and pushes the chair toward her*]. I say, ma'am — [*She sits and he goes up R and gets another chair from the table, bringing it back, carefully placing it a good distance to the R of her. He sits gingerly, looking longingly off R*].

MISS HARD. [*coily edging her chair toward his*] Sir! [*During this scene MISS HARDCASTLE edges her chair toward him on every line; he edges his away on each line and the two scoot across the stage in this manner*].

MAR. I am afraid, ma'am, I am not so happy as to make myself agreeable to the ladies — [*He moves his chair to R away from her*].

MISS HARD. The ladies, I should hope, have employed some part of your addresses. [*She moves her chair closer*].

MAR. [*relapsing into timidity*] Pardon me, madam, I — I — I — as yet have studied — only — to — deserve them. [*He moves his chair R again*].

MISS HARD. And that, some say, is the very worst way to obtain them. [*She moves closer*].

MAR. Perhaps so, madam. But I love to converse only with the more grave and sensible part of the sex. — But I'm afraid I grow tiresome. [*He moves R again*].

MISS HARD. Not at all, sir; there is nothing I like so much as grave conversation myself; I could hear it forever. Indeed, I have often been surprised how a man of sentiment could ever admire those light, airy pleasures, where nothing reaches the heart. [*She moves after him*].

MAR. It's — a disease — of the mind, madam. In the variety of tastes there must be some who, wanting a relish — for — um — a — um. [*He moves R*].

MISS HARD. I understand you, sir. There must be some who, wanting a relish for refined pleasure, pretend to despise what they are incapable of tasting. [*She moves R*].

MAR. My meaning, madam, but infinitely better expressed. And I can't help observing — a — [*He moves R*].

MISS HARD. [*aside*] Who could ever suppose this gentleman impudent upon some occasions! [*to MARLOW*] You were going to observe, sir — [*She moves R*].

MAR. I was observing, madam — I protest, madam, I forget what I was going to observe. [*He moves his chair another inch toward the R door in despair*].

MISS HARD. [*aside*] I vow and so do I. [*to MARLOW*] You were observing, sir, that in this age of hypocrisy — something about hypocrisy, sir.

MAR. [*still he has never looked at her*] Yes, madam, in this age of hypocrisy there are few who upon strict inquiry do not — a — a — a —

MISS HARD. [*smiling at his discomfiture*] I understand you perfectly, sir.

MAR. [*aside*] Egad! and that's more than I do myself!

MISS HARD. You mean that in this hypocritical age there are few who do not condemn in public what they practice in private, and think they pay every debt to virtue when they praise it.

MAR. True, madam; those who have most virtue in their mouths have least of it in their bosoms — breasts — no, no, hearts. But I'm sure I tire you, madam. [*He tries to move farther away but finds himself blocked by the door*].

MISS HARD. Not in the least, sir; there's something so agreeable and spirited in your manner, such life and force — pray, sir, go on. [*She laughs behind her fan*].

MAR. Yes, madam, I was saying — but I see Miss Neville expecting us in the next room. I would not intrude for the world. [*He rises quickly, mops his brow with his handkerchief; puts his chair behind him in such a way that it is directly in front of the door*].

MISS HARD. [*rising*] I protest, sir, I never was more agreeably entertained in my life.

MAR. [*looking off R*] But she beckons us to join her. Madam, shall I do myself the honor to attend you? [*He bows, mopping his brow. In bowing, he knocks her fan from her hand. Stammering, he stoops to pick it up, then hands her his handkerchief instead of the fan.*]

Apologetically he bows as he returns the fan; steps back in bowing and stumbles over the chair. Finally he offers her his arm and without noticing that she doesn't take it, rushes off R].

MISS HARD. [*looking after him*] Well, then, I'll follow. [*She laughs merrily*]. Was there ever such a sober, sentimental interview! I'm certain he scarce looked in my face the whole time. [*replaces chair at table and armchair up R*] Yet the fellow, but for his unaccountable bashfulness, is pretty well, too. He has good sense, but then so buried in his fears, that it fatigues one more than ignorance. If I could teach him a little confidence, it would be doing somebody that I know of a piece of service. But who is that somebody? — that, faith, is a question I can scarce answer. [*She exits R*].

[*TONY followed by MISS NEVILLE enters from rear C*].

TONY. What do you follow me for, Cousin Con? I wonder you're not ashamed to be so very engaging?

MISS N. [*following him down L*] I hope, cousin, one may speak to one's own relations, and not be to blame.

TONY. Ay, but I want to know what sort of a relation you want to make me, though; but it won't do. I tell you, Cousin Con, it won't do, so I beg you'll keep your distance; I want no nearer relationship. [*In disgust he pulls up chair down L, to face fireplace, and sits. Teasingly she sits on the arm. They are almost hidden from MRS. HARDCASTLE and HASTINGS who enter from R*].

MRS. HARD. [*simpering*] Well, I vow, Mr. Hastings, you're very entertaining. There is nothing in the world I love to talk of so much as London and the fashions, though I was never there myself. [*She stops at RC*].

HAST. Never there! You amaze me! From your air and manner, I concluded you had been bred all your life either at Ranalagh, St. James's, [*aside*] or Tower Wharf.

MRS. HARD. [*giggling like a girl*] O sir, you're only pleased to say so. We country persons can have no manner at all. I'm in love with the town, and that serves to raise me above some of our neighboring rustics. All I can do is to enjoy London at second-hand. I take care to have all the fashions, as they come out, in a letter from the two Miss Rickets of Crooked-lane. [*taking a step L and pirouetting, hand to hair*]. Pray how do you like this head, Mr. Hastings?

HAST. [*with great pretended enthusiasm*] Extremely elegant and *dégagée*, upon my word, madam. Your friseur is a Frenchman, I suppose?

MRS. HARD. [*giggling with pleasure*] I protest I dressed it myself from a print in the *Ladies' Memorandum-book* for the last year.

HAST. Indeed! At your age you may wear what you please, and it must become you.

MRS. HARD. Pray, Mr. Hastings, what do you take to be the most fashionable age about town?

HAST. Some time ago forty was all the mode; but I'm told the ladies intend to bring up fifty for the ensuing winter.

MRS. HARD. Seriously? [*giggling*] Then I shall be too young for the fashion. [TONY and MISS NEVILLE come down from the fireplace. MISS NEVILLE mischievously tries to hang on TONY's arm; he pushes her off].

HAST. No lady begins to put on jewels now till she's past forty. For instance, [*indicates CONSTANCE*] Miss there, in a polite circle, would be considered as a child, a mere maker of samplers.

MRS. HARD. And yet my niece thinks herself as much a woman, and is as fond of jewels, as the oldest of us all.

HAST. Your niece, is she? And that young gentleman — a brother of yours, I should presume?

MRS. HARD. [*giggling*] My son, sir. They are contracted to each other. Observe their little sports. [*Tony shoves MISS NEVILLE away*]. They quarrel and make it up again ten times a day, as if they were man and wife already. [*to them*] Well, Tony, child, what soft things are you saying to your Cousin Constance this evening?

TONY. I have been saying no soft things; but that it's very hard to be followed about so. Ecod, I've not a place in the house now that's left to myself but the stable.

MRS. HARD. Never mind him, Con, my dear. He's in another story behind your back.

MISS N. There's something generous in my cousin's manner. [*looking at him with pretended sweetness*] He falls out before faces to be forgiven in private.

TONY. That's a confounded — crack.

MRS. HARD. Don't you think they are like each other about the mouth, Mr. Hastings?

HAST. Very like.

MRS. HARD. The Blenkinsop mouth to a T. They're of a size too. Back to back, my pretties, that Mr. Hastings may see you.

TONY. You had as good not make me, I can tell you. [MRS. HARDCASTLE pulls TONY toward MISS NEVILLE, and makes them stand back to back to be measured. He knocks his head against MISS NEVILLE'S].

MISS N. Oh, he has almost cracked my head. [She crosses to HASTINGS].

MRS. HARD. For shame, Tony! You a man, and behave so!

TONY. If I'm a man, let me have my fortune. Ecod! I'll not be made a fool of any longer.

MRS. HARD. Is this, ungrateful boy, all that I'm to get for the pains I've taken in your education? Didn't I rock you in a cradle? Didn't I work that waistcoat and those ruffles to make you look genteel?

TONY. [rubbing his wrist across his mouth and grimacing] Ecod! I'll tell you I'll not be made a fool of any longer.

MRS. HARD. [yelling at him] Wasn't it all for your good, viper? Wasn't it all for your good?

TONY. [also yelling] I wish you'd let me and my good alone, then. Snubbing this way when I'm in spirits. If I'm to have any good, let it come of itself; not to keep dinging it, dinging it into one so.

MRS. HARD. [louder] That's false; I never see you when you're in spirits. No, Tony, you then go to the alehouse or kennel. I'm never to be delighted with your agreeable, wild notes, unfeeling monster!

TONY. [even louder] Ecod! mamma, your own notes are the wildest of the two. [He goes and lolls over the back of the chair down L].

MRS. HARD. Was ever the like! But I see he wants to break my heart; I see he does. [She weeps and sniffles. TONY mimics her].

HAST. [crossing to MRS. HARD.] Dear madam, permit me to lecture the young gentleman a little. I'm certain I can persuade him to his duty.

MRS. HARD. [*sniffing*] Well! I must retire. [*She looks at TONY, who puts his hands to his head and waggles his fingers at her, sticking out his tongue*]. Come, Constance, my love. You see, Mr. Hastings, the wretchedness of my situation; was ever poor woman so plagued with a dear, sweet, provoking, undutiful boy! [MRS. HARD., *still sniffing*, exits rear C followed by CONSTANCE, who tries to be demure and refrain from laughing].

TONY. [*singing, beating on the chair*]

“There was a young man riding by,
And fain would have his will,
Twang-to-dillo-dell” —

Don't mind her; let her cry. It's the comfort of her heart. I have seen her and sister cry over a book for an hour together, and they said they liked the book the better the more it made them cry.

HAST. [*crossing to him*] Then you're no friend to the ladies, I find, my pretty young gentleman?

TONY. That's as I find 'um.

HAST. Not to her [*indicates CONSTANCE*] of your mother's choosing, I dare answer? And yet she appears to be a pretty, well-tempered girl.

TONY. That's because you don't know her as well as I. Ecod! I know every inch about her; and there's not a more cantankerous toad in all Christendom.

HAST. [*aside*] Pretty encouragement this for a lover!

TONY. I have seen her since the height of that. [*He measures*]. She has as many tricks as a hare in a thicket, or a colt the first day's breaking.

HAST. To me she appears sensible and silent.

TONY. Ay, before company. But when she's with her playmates, she's as loud as a hog in a gate.

HAST. Well, but you must allow her a little beauty. Yes, you must allow her some beauty.

TONY. Bandbox! She's all a made-up thing, man. Ah! could you but see Bet Bouncer of these parts, you might then talk of beauty. [*He sinks into the chair, rapt, forgetting HASTINGS*]. Ecod! She has two eyes as black as sloes, and cheeks as broad and red as a pulpit cushion. She would make two of she.

HAST. Well, what say you to a friend that would take this bitter bargain off your hands?

TONY. [*jumping up*] Anon?

HAST. Would you thank him, that would take Miss Neville, and leave you to happiness and your dear Betsey?

TONY. [*lets out a long whistle, then turns away in disgust*] Ay; but where is there such a friend, for who would take her?

HAST. I am he. If you but assist me, I'll engage to whip her off to France, and you shall never hear more of her.

TONY. Assist you? [*He runs to HASTINGS*]. Ecod, I will, to the last drop of my blood. I'll clap a pair of horses to your chaise that shall trundle you off in a twinkling, and maybe get you part of her fortune beside, in jewels, that you little dream of.

HAST. My dear squire, this looks like a lad of spirit.

TONY. Come along, then, and you shall see more of my spirit before you have done with me. [*He grabs HASTINGS and they exit rear C, arm in arm, singing*].

“We are the boys
That fear no noise
Where the thundering cannons roar.”

QUICK CURTAIN

ACT II — SCENE I

The parlor of the Hardcastle mansion. HARDCASTLE enters rear C and walks down to talk to audience.

HARD. What could my old friend Sir Charles mean by recommending his son as the modestest young man in town? To me he appears the most impudent piece of brass that ever spoke with a tongue. He has taken possession of the easy chair by the fireside already. He took off his boots in the parlor, and desired me to see them taken care of. I'm desirous to know how his impudence affects my daughter. She will certainly be shocked at it. [MISS HARDCASTLE enters from rear C, humming. She is dressed in a simple housedress]. Well, my Kate, I see you have changed your dress as I bid you; and yet, I believe, there was no great occasion.

MISS HARD. [coming down C and curtseying to him] I find such a pleasure, sir, in obeying your commands, that I take care to observe them without ever debating their propriety.

HARD. [apologetically] And yet, Kate, I sometimes give you some cause, particularly when I recommended my modest gentleman to you as a lover today.

MISS HARD. You taught me to expect something extraordinary, and I find the original exceeds the description.

HARD. I was never so surprised in all my life! He has quite confounded all my faculties!

MISS HARD. I never saw anything like it; and a man of the world, too!

HARD. Ay, he learned it all abroad. What a fool was I, to think a young man could learn modesty by traveling. He might as soon learn wit at a masquerade.

MISS HARD. It seems all natural to him.

HARD. A good deal assisted by bad company and a French dancing-master.

MISS HARD. Sure, you mistake, papa! A French dancing-master could never have taught him that timid look — that awkward address — that bashful manner —

HARD. [*amazed*] Whose look? Whose manner, child?

MISS HARD. Mr. Marlow's. His timidity struck me at first sight.

HARD. Then your first sight deceived you; for I think him one of the most brazen first sights that ever astonished my senses.

MISS HARD. [*steps toward her father*] Sure, sir, you rally? I never saw anyone so modest.

HARD. And can you be serious? I never saw such a bouncing, swaggering puppy since I was born.

MISS HARD. Surprising! He met me with a respectful bow, a stammering voice, and a look fixed on the ground.

HARD. He met me with a loud voice, a lordly air, and a familiarity that froze me to death.

MISS HARD. He treated me with diffidence and respect; censured the manners of the age; admired the prudence of the girl that never laughed; tired me with apologies for being tiresome; then left the room with a bow, and "Madam, I would not detain you." [*She mimics MARLOW*].

HARD. [*indignantly*] He spoke to me as if he knew me all his life before. Asked twenty questions, and never waited for an answer. Interrupted my best remarks with some silly pun, and when I was talking of the Duke of Marlborough and my friend Brooks, he asked if I was not a good hand at making punch. Yes, Kate, he asked if I was not a maker of punch!

MISS HARD. [*turning away thoughtfully*] One of us must certainly be mistaken.

HARD. In one thing, however, we are agreed — to reject him.

MISS HARD. [*hesitatingly*] Yes. [*turning to him*] But upon conditions. For if you should find him less impudent, and I more presuming; I don't know — the man is well enough for a man — certainly he has a very passable complexion.

HARD. If we should find him so — but that's impossible. The first appearance has done my business; I'm seldom deceived in that.

MISS HARD. Then as one of us must be mistaken, what if we go to make further discoveries?

HARD. Agreed. But, depend on't, I'm in the right. [*He shakes his finger at her and starts to exit R*].

MISS HARD. [*shakes her finger at him and exits down R*] And depend on't I'm not much in the wrong.

[*As they exit R, TONY runs in from rear C*].

TONY. Ecod! I have got them. Here they are. My Cousin Con's necklaces, bobs and all. My mother shan't cheat the poor souls out of their fortune neither. [*He sits on the table, R, swinging his legs as HASTINGS enters from rear C*]. Oh, is that you?

HAST. My dear friend, how have you managed with your mother? I hope you have amused her with pretending love for your cousin, and that you are willing to be reconciled at last; we shall be ready to set off in a short time.

TONY. And here's something to bear your charges by the way. [*hands him the casket*] Your sweetheart's jewels. Keep them, and hang those, I say, that would rob you of one of them.

HAST. But how have you procured them from your mother?

TONY. Ask me no questions, and I'll tell you no fibs. I procured them by the rule of the thumb. If I had not a key to every drawer in mother's bureau, how could I go to the ale-house so often as I do? An honest man may rob himself of his own at any time. [*Throughout the following speeches TONY is continually at some piece of monkey business. He tips two chairs together and tries to balance them. He sits on the table and tries to get his foot around his neck while talking*].

HAST. Thousands do it every day. But, to be plain with you, Miss Neville is endeavoring to procure them from her aunt this very instant. If she succeeds, it will be the most delicate way, at least, of obtaining them.

TONY. Well, keep them, till you know how it will be. But I know how it will be well enough; she'd as soon part with the only sound tooth in her head.

HAST. But I dread the effects of her resentment when she finds she has lost them.

TONY. Never you mind her resentment; leave me to manage that. I don't value her resentment the bounce of a cracker. Zounds! here they are. [*He straddles a chair and pretends to be driving horses at a great rate as HASTINGS hurriedly exits down R*].

[*MRS. HARDCASTLE and MISS NEVILLE enter from up rear C*].

MRS. HARD. Indeed, Constance, you amaze me; such a girl as you want jewels! It will be time enough for jewels, my dear, these twenty years hence, when your beauty begins to want repairs. [*She comes C, Constance at her R*].

MISS N. But what will repair beauty at forty will certainly improve it at twenty, madam.

MRS. HARD. Yours, my dear, can admit of none. That natural blush is beyond a thousand ornaments. Besides, child, jewels are quite out at present. Don't you see half the ladies of our acquaintance, my Lady Kill-day-light, and Mrs. Crump, and the rest of them, carry their jewels to town, and bring nothing but paste and marcasites back?

MISS N. But who knows, madam, but somebody that shall be nameless would like me best with all my little finery about me?

MRS. HARD. Consult your glass, my dear, and then see if, with such a pair of eyes, you want any better sparklers. [*turns to TONY*] Does your Cousin Con want any jewels, in your eyes, to set off her beauty?

TONY. [*gets off the chair and puts it back to the table*] That's as hereafter may be.

MISS N. My dear aunt, if you knew how it would oblige me —

MRS. HARD. They would make you look like the court of King Solomon at a puppet-show. [*moving down L*] Besides, I believe I can't readily come at them. They may be missing, for aught I know to the contrary.

TONY. [*crossing L to MRS. HARDCASTLE, speaks to her in a loud undertone*] Then why don't you tell her so at once, as she's so longing for them? Tell her they're lost. It's the only way to quiet her. Say they are lost and call me to bear witness.

MRS. HARD. [*aside to TONY*] You know, my dear, I'm only keeping them for you. So, if I say they're gone, you'll bear me witness, will you? He! he! he!

TONY. Never fear me. Ecod! I'll say I saw them taken out with my own eyes. [*He laughs uproariously*].

MISS N. [*crossing to her*] I desire them but for a day, madam. Just to be permitted to show them as relics, and then they may be locked up again.

MRS. HARD. To be plain with you, my dear Constance, if I could find them, you should have them. They're missing, I

assure you. Lost, for aught I know. But we must have patience wherever they are.

MISS N. I'll not believe it; this is but a shallow pretence to deny me. I know they're too valuable to be so slightly kept, and as you are to answer for the loss —

MRS. HARD. Don't be alarmed, Constance. If they be lost, I must restore an equivalent. But my son knows they're missing and not to be found.

TONY. That I can bear witness to. They are missing, and not to be found, I'll take my oath on't. Besides, what's the odds? Mother's got to give the equil-phunt. [*He laughs loudly again*].

MRS. HARD. You must learn resignation, my dear; for though we lose our fortune, yet we should not lose our patience. See me, how calm I am.

TONY. Yes, see how calm I am.

MISS N. Ay, people are generally calm at the misfortunes of others.

MRS. HARD. Now, I wonder a girl of your good sense should waste a thought upon such trumpery. We shall soon find them, and in the meantime you shall make use of my garnets till your jewels be found.

MISS N. I detest garnets.

MRS. HARD. The most becoming things in the world to set off a clear complexion. You have often seen how well they looked upon me. You shall have them. [*She exits rear C*].

MISS N. I dislike them of all things. Was ever anything so provoking — to mislay my own jewels, and force me to wear her trumpery!

TONY. [*crossing to R to CONSTANCE*] Don't be a fool! If she gives you the garnets, take what you can get. [*looks around, then whispers loudly*] The jewels are your own already. I have stolen them out of her bureau, and she does not know it. Fly to your spark, he'll tell you more of the matter. Leave me to manage her.

MISS N. [*hugs him*] My dear cousin!

TONY. [*as MRS. HARDCASTLE screams off stage*] Vanish. She's here, and has missed them already. Zounds! how she fidgets and spits.

[CONSTANCE *exits down R* as MRS. HARDCASTLE *rushes in rear C*].

MRS. HARD. Confusion! thieves! robbers! We are cheated, plundered, broke open, undone! [*She runs down R to TONY, wringing her hands*].

TONY. What's the matter, what's the matter, mamma? I hope nothing has happened to any of the good family?

MRS. HARD. We are robbed. My bureau has been broke open, the jewels are taken out, and I'm undone!

TONY. Oh! is that all? Ha! ha! ha! By the laws, I never saw it better acted in my life. Ecod, I thought you was ruined in earnest, ha! ha! ha!

MRS. HARD. Why, boy, I am ruined in earnest. My bureau has been broke open, and all taken away.

TONY. Stick to that; ha! ha! ha! stick to that. [*He slaps her on the back*]. I'll bear witness, you know; call me to bear witness.

MRS. HARD. I tell you, Tony, by all that's precious, the jewels are gone, and I shall be ruined forever.

TONY. Sure I know they're gone, and I am to say so.

MRS. HARD. My dearest Tony, but hear me. They're gone, I say.

TONY. By the laws, mamma, you make me for to laugh, ha! ha! I know who took them well enough, ha! ha! ha! [*He doubles up with laughter*].

MRS. HARD. Was there ever such a blockhead, that can't tell the difference between jest and earnest? [*shaking him*] I tell you I'm not in jest, booby.

TONY. That's right, that's right; you must be in a bitter passion, and then nobody will suspect either of us. I'll bear witness that they are gone.

MRS. HARD. [*walks to C, wringing her hands*] Was there ever such a cross-grained brute, that won't hear me? Can you bear witness that you're no better than a fool? Was ever poor woman so beset with fools on the one hand, and thieves on the other!

TONY. I can bear witness to that.

MRS. HARD. [*turning on him*] Bear witness again, you block-head, you, and I'll turn you out of the room directly. My poor niece, what will become of her? [TONY *lets out a whoop of*

laughter]. Do you laugh, you unfeeling brute, as if you enjoyed my distress?

TONY. I can bear witness to that.

MRS. HARD. Do you insult me, monster? [*She slaps at him and he runs around the table twice, she after him. Finally both exit rear C, TONY laughing loudly and MRS. HARDCASTLE scolding*]. I'll teach you to vex your mother, I will.

MISS HARD. [*entering from down R followed by maid*] What an unaccountable creature is that brother of mine, to send them to the house as an inn. Ha! ha! I don't wonder at his impudence.

MAID. But what is more, madam, the young gentleman, as you passed by in your present dress, asked me if you were the barmaid. He mistook you for a barmaid, madam.

MISS HARD. Did he? Then, as I live, I'm resolved to keep up the delusion. Tell me, how do you like my present dress? [*She smooths her dress and fingers the keys at her belt*].

MAID. It's the dress, madam, that every lady wears in the country, but when she visits or receives company.

MISS HARD. And are you sure he does not remember my face or person?

MAID. Certain of it.

MISS HARD. I vow I thought so; for though we spoke for some time together, yet his fears were such that he never once looked up during the interview.

MAID. But what do you hope for from keeping him in his mistake?

MISS HARD. In the first place, I shall be seen, and that is no small advantage to a girl who brings her face to market. But my chief aim is to take my gentleman off his guard.

MAID. But are you sure you can act your part, and disguise your voice so that he may mistake that, as he has already mistaken your person?

MISS HARD. Never fear me. I think I have got the true barcant. [*She mimics a barmaid's manner*]. Did your honor call? Attend the Lion, there! Pipes and tobacco for the Angel! The Lamb has been outrageous this half hour.

MAID. [*laughing*] It will do, madam. [*looking off R*] But he's here. [*She exits rear C*].

MAR. [*entering down R*] What a bawling in every part of the house! I have scarce a moment's repose. If I go to the best room, there I find my host and his story. If I fly to the gallery, there we have my hostess with her curtsy down to the ground. I have at last got a moment to myself, and now for recollection. [*He paces back and forth RC*].

MISS HARD. [*stepping in front of him*] Did you call, sir? Did your honor call?

MAR. [*musings, pushes her aside and walks LC*] As for Miss Hardcastle, she's too grave and sentimental for me.

MISS HARD. [*hurrying to place herself in front of him*] Did your honor call?

MAR. No, child. [*He pushes her aside and goes on musing*]. Besides, from the glimpse I had of her, I think she squints.

MISS HARD. [*again in front of him*] I am sure, sir, I heard the bell ring.

MAR. No, no. [*musings*] I have pleased my father, however, by coming down, and I'll tomorrow please myself by returning.

MISS HARD. Perhaps the other gentleman called, sir?

MAR. No, no, I tell you. [*He turns on her almost angrily, then, seeing her face, stops and becomes interested*]. Yes, child, I think I did call. I wanted — I wanted — I vow, child, you are vastly handsome.

MISS HARD. [*curtseying*] Ah, la, sir, you'll make one ashamed.

MAR. Never saw a more sprightly, malicious eye. Yes, yes, my dear, I did call. Have you got any of your — what d'ye call it, in the house?

MISS HARD. No, sir, we have been out of that these ten days.

MAR. One may call in this house, I find, to very little purpose. Suppose I should call for a taste, just by way of trial, of the nectar of your lips; perhaps I might be disappointed in that, too. [*He draws near and tries to take her hand*].

MISS HARD. [*stepping back innocently*] Nectar! nectar! That's a liquor there's no call for in these parts. French, I suppose. We keep no French wines here, sir.

MAR. Of true English growth, I assure you.

MISS HARD. Then it's odd I should not know it. We brew all sorts of wines in this house, and I have lived here these eighteen years.

MAR. Eighteen years! Why, one would think, child, you kept the bar before you were born. How old are you?

MISS HARD. [*shyly turning away*] Oh, sir, I must not tell my age. They say women and music should never be dated.

MAR. To guess at this distance, you can't be much above forty. [*He steps toward her*]. Yet nearer, I don't think so much. By coming close to some women they look younger still; [*crossing closer*] but when we come very close indeed — [*He attempts to kiss her*].

MISS HARD. [*evading him crosses down L*] Pray, sir, keep your distance. One would think you wanted to know one's age as they do horses, by mark of mouth.

MAR. I protest, child, you use me extremely ill. If you keep me at this distance, how is it possible you and I can be ever acquainted?

MISS HARD. And who wants to be acquainted with you? I want no such acquaintance, not I. I'm sure you did not treat Miss Hardcastle in this obstrepalious manner. I'll warrant me, before her you looked dashed, and kept bowing to the ground, and talked for all the world as if you were a justice of the peace.

MAR. [*aside*] Egad! she has hit it, sure enough. [*stepping toward her*] A mere awkward, squinting thing; no, no, I find you don't know me. I laughed, and rallied her a little; but I was unwilling to be too severe. No, I could not be too severe, curse me!

MISS HARD. Oh! then, sir, you are a favorite, I find, among the ladies?

MAR. Yes, my dear, a great favorite; and yet, hang me, I don't see what they find in me to follow. At the Ladies' Club in town, I am called their agreeable Rattle.

MISS HARD. Hold, sir; you were introducing me to your club, not to yourself. And you're so great a favorite there, you say?

MAR. Yes, my dear.

MISS HARD. Then it's a very merry place, I suppose?

MAR. Yes, as merry as cards, suppers, wines, and old women can make us.

MISS HARD. And their agreeable Rattle, ha! ha! ha!

MAR. [*aside*] Egad! I don't quite like this chit. She looks knowing, methinks. [*coming closer*] You laugh, child?

MISS HARD. I can't but laugh to think what time they all have for minding their work or their family.

MAR. [*aside*] All's well; she don't laugh at me. Do you ever work, child?

MISS HARD. Ay, sure. There's not a screen or a quilt in the whole house but what can bear witness to that. [*HARDCASTLE enters rear C and stands watching. MARLOW, with his back to him, does not see him*].

MAR. Odso! Then you must show me your embroidery. If you want a judge of your work, you must apply to me. [*He takes her hands*].

MISS HARD. [*pulling away from him*] Ay, but the colors don't look well by candlelight. You shall see all in the morning. [*She runs past him to down R*].

MAR. And why not now, my angel? Such beauty fires beyond the power of resistance. [*He starts after her as HARDCASTLE steps forward. MARLOW stops in embarrassment at LC, then exits hurriedly near C as MISS HARDCASTLE laughs*].

HARD. So, madam! So I find this is your *modest* lover. Kate, Kate, art thou not ashamed to deceive your father so?

MISS HARD. But he's still the modest man I first took him for, you'll be convinced of it as well as I.

HARD. By the hand of my body, I believe his impudence is infectious! Didn't I see him seize your hand? Didn't I see him haul you about like a milkmaid? And now you talk of his respect and his modesty!

MISS HARD. But if I shortly convince you of his modesty, I hope you'll forgive him.

HARD. [*almost tearing his hair*] That girl would actually make one run mad! [*turning on her*] I tell you I'll not be convinced. I am convinced. You may like his impudence and call it modesty. But my son-in-law, madam, must have very different qualifications.

MISS HARD. [*crossing and laying her hand on his arm*] Sir, I ask but this night to convince you.

HARD. [*turning away crossly*] You shall not have half the time, for I have thoughts of turning him out this very hour.

MISS HARD. [*coaxingly putting her arms about his neck*] Give me that hour then, and I hope to satisfy you.

HARD. [*reluctantly relenting as she strokes his hair*] Well, an hour let it be, then. [*She gives him a quick kiss and laughing runs off R. He turns and shakes a finger after her*]. But I'll have no trifling with your father. All fair and open, [*calling after her*] do you mind me?

CURTAIN

ACT II — SCENE 2

The parlor of the Hardcastle mansion. HASTINGS and MISS NEVILLE enter arm in arm.

HAST. You surprise me! Sir Charles Marlow expected here tonight? Where have you had your information?

MISS N. [*looking around secretively*] I just saw his letter to Mr. Hardcastle, in which he tells him he intends setting out a few hours after his son.

HAST. Then, my Constance, all must be completed before he arrives. He knows me; and should he find me here, would discover all.

MISS N. The jewels are safe, I hope.

HAST. Yes, yes. I have sent them to Marlow, who keeps the keys to our baggage. In the meantime, I'll go prepare matters for our elopement. [*He starts off rear C, then returns, looks around, quickly kisses her, and exits rear C*].

MISS N. Well, success attend you. In the meantime, I'll go amuse my aunt with the old pretence of a violent passion for my cousin. [*She exits down R*].

MAR. [*entering rear C*] I wonder what Hastings could mean by sending me so valuable a thing as a casket to keep for him, when he knows the only place I have is the seat of a post-coach at an inn-door. Well, I have deposited the casket with the landlady. I have put it into her own hands. She said she would keep it safe. [*He moves down L*]. What an unaccountable set of beings have we got amongst! This little barmaid, though, runs in my head most strangely, and drives out the

absurdities of all the rest of the family. She's mine — she must be mine, or I'm greatly mistaken.

[HASTINGS enters rear C, whistling].

HAST. Marlow here, and in spirits, too!

MAR. Give me joy, George! Crown me, shadow me with laurels! Well, George, after all, we modest fellows don't want for success among the women. [*He slaps him on the back*].

HAST. Some women, you mean. But what success has your honor's modesty been crowned with now, that it grows so insolent upon us?

MAR. Didn't you see the tempting, brisk, lovely little thing that runs about the house with a bunch of keys to its girdle?

HAST. Well, and what then?

MAR. She's mine, you rogue, you. [*going into a trance of ecstasy*] Such fire, such motion, such eyes, such lips — [*coming out of his trance to disappointed reality*] but, egad! She would not let me kiss them, though.

HAST. [*laughing*] I believe the girl has virtue.

MAR. She has, and I should be the last man in the world that would attempt to corrupt it. [*He crosses to right of C*].

HAST. You have taken care, I hope, of the casket I sent you to lock up? [*walks carelessly to C*] Is it in safety?

MAR. Yes, yes; it's safe enough. I have taken care of it. But how could you think the seat of a post-coach at an inn-door a place of safety? Ah, numbskull! I have taken better precautions for you than you did for yourself. I have —

HAST. [*anxiously crosses to him*] What?

MAR. I have sent it to the landlady to keep for you.

HAST. [*gulps, steps back, then says weakly*] To the landlady?

MAR. The landlady.

HAST. [*very weakly*] You did?

MAR. I did. She's to be answerable for its forthcoming, you know.

HAST. [*crossing him and sitting heavily in chair at L of table*] Yes, she'll bring it forth, with a witness.

MAR. You seem a little disconcerted, though, methinks. [*crosses to stand beside him*] Sure nothing has happened?

HAST. No, nothing. Never was in better spirits in all my

life. And so you left it with the landlady, who, no doubt, very readily undertook the charge?

MAR. Rather too readily. For she not only kept the casket, but, through her great precaution, was going to keep the messenger, too. Ha! ha! ha! [*He laughs loudly*].

HAST. [*laughs very weakly, without mirth; then aside*] Ha! ha! ha! So now all hopes of fortune are at an end, and we must set off without it. [*rises*] Well, Charles, I'll leave you to your meditations on the pretty barmaid, and — if you are as successful for yourself as you have been for me — ha! ha! ha!

MAR. [*in wonderment at his laughing*] What then?

HAST. [*going out down R*] Why, then, I wish you joy with all my heart.

[*MARLOW goes to the door and looks after him, scratching his chin in puzzlement; HARDCASTLE enters from rear C*].

HARD. I no longer know my own house. It's turned all topsy-turvy. I'll bear it no longer; and yet, from my respect for his father, I'll be calm. Mr. Marlow, your servant. I'm your very humble servant. [*He bows low*].

MAR. [*also bowing*] Sir, your humble servant. [*aside*] What's to be the wonder now?

HARD. I believe, sir, you must be sensible, sir, that no man alive ought to be more welcome than your father's son, sir; I hope you think so?

MAR. I do from my soul, sir. I generally make my father's son welcome wherever he goes.

HARD. I believe you do, from my soul, sir. But though I say nothing to your own conduct, that of your servants is insufferable. Their manner of making merry is setting a very bad example in this house, I assure you.

MAR. I protest, my very good sir, that's no fault of mine. If they don't carouse as they ought, they are to blame. My positive directions were, that as I did not make merry myself, they should make up for my deficiencies below.

HARD. Then they had your orders for what they do! [*walks majestically L to fireplace*] I'm satisfied.

MAR. They had, I assure you.

HARD. [*to the audience*] Zounds! He'll drive me distracted if I contain myself any longer. [*turning to MARLOW with great*

dignity] Mr. Marlow, sir, I have submitted to your insolence for more than four hours, and I see no likelihood of its coming to an end. I'm now resolved to be master here, sir, and I desire that you and your drunken pack may leave my house directly.

MAR. Leave your house? [*sits calmly at L of table*] Sure, you jest, my good friend!

HARD. I tell you, sir, you don't please me; so I desire you'll leave my house.

MAR. Sure, you cannot be serious? At this time of night, and such a night! [*gives a light laugh*] You only mean to banter me.

HARD. [*crossing to him, getting in a rage*] I tell you, sir, I'm serious; and now that my passions are roused, I say this house is mine, sir; this house is mine, and I command you to leave it directly.

MAR. A puddle in a storm! [*leaning back in his chair*] I shan't stir a step, I assure you. This your house, fellow! It's my house. [*leaning forward to HARDCASTLE*] What right have you to bid me leave this house, sir? I never met with such impudence, never in my whole life before.

HARD. [*building up to a climax of rage, throwing his arms about*] Nor I, confound me if ever I did. To come to my house, to call for what he likes, to turn me out of my own chair, to insult the family, to order his servants to get drunk, and then to tell me, "This house is mine, sir." By all that's impudent, it makes me laugh. Ha! ha! ha! [*almost bellows*] Pray, sir, [*very sarcastic*] as you take the house, what think you of taking the rest of the furniture? There's a pair of silver candlesticks, and there's a fire screen, and —

MAR. [*rising, sternly*] Bring me your bill, I say, and I'll leave you and your infernal house directly.

HARD. [*still very sarcastic*] Then there's a brass warming-pan, and a mahogany table that you may see your own brazen face in.

MAR. Zounds! Bring me my bill, I say, and let's hear no more on't.

HARD. [*calming down to an injured air*] Young man, young man, from your father's letter to me, I was taught to expect a

well-bred, modest man as a visitor here, but now I find him no better than a bully; but your father will be down here presently, and shall hear more of it. [*HARDCASTLE exits rear C, majestically*].

MAR. [*looking after him, perplexed*] How's this! Sure I've not mistaken the house? Everything looks like an inn. [*He walks down LC, turning as KATE starts across the stage from down R to rear C*]. The attendance is awkward; the barmaid, too, to attend us. But she's here, and will further inform me. [*He crosses and steps in front of her*]. Whither so fast, child? A word with you.

MISS HARD. [*turning away R*] Let it be short, then. I'm in a hurry.

MAR. [*coming down to L of her*] Pray, child, answer me one question. What are you, and what may your business in this house be?

MISS HARD. A relation of the family, sir.

MAR. What! A poor relation?

MISS HARD. Yes, sir. A poor relation appointed to keep the keys, and to see that the guests want nothing.

MAR. That is, you act as the barmaid of this inn?

MISS HARD. Inn! oh, law! What brought that in your head? One of the best families in the county keep an inn! ha! ha! [*She laughs merrily*]. Old Mr. Hardcastle's house an inn!

MAR. [*grabbing her arm in terror*] Mr. Hardcastle's house! Is this house Mr. Hardcastle's house, child?

MISS HARD. Ay, sure. Whose else should it be?

MAR. [*walking down left frantically*] So, then, all's out, and I have been damnably imposed on. Oh, confound my stupid head! I shall be laughed at over the whole town. To mistake this house of all others for an inn, and my father's old friend for an innkeeper. [*groaning*] What a swaggering puppy must he take me for! What a silly puppy do I find myself! [*turning to her*] There again, may I be hanged, my dear, but I mistook you for the barmaid.

MISS HARD. [*pouting*] Dear me! dear me! I'm sure there's nothing in my behavior to put me upon a level with one of that stamp.

MAR. [*crossing to her*] Nothing, my dear, nothing. But I was in for a list of blunders, and could not help making you a subscriber. [*sadly*] My stupidity saw everything the wrong way. I mistook your assiduity for assurance, and your simplicity for allurements. [*turning away woefully*] But it's over — this house I no more show my face in.

MISS HARD. [*sniffles a little*] I hope, sir, I have done nothing to disoblige you. I'm sure I should be sorry to affront any gentleman who has been so polite, [*beginning to cry, shyly looking up at him between sobs*] and said so many civil things to me. I'm sure I should be sorry if he left the family upon my account. I'm sure I should be sorry people said anything amiss, since I have no fortune but my character.

MAR. [*aside*] By heaven, she weeps! This is the first mark of tenderness I ever had from a modest woman, and it touches me.

MISS HARD. But I'm sure my family is as good as Miss Hardcastle's, and though I'm poor, that's no great misfortune to a contented mind.

MAR. [*aside*] This simplicity bewitches me so, that if I stay I'm undone. I must make one bold effort, and leave her. [*to her*] Your partiality in my favor, my dear, touches me most sensibly; and were I to live for myself alone, I could easily fix my choice, but I owe too much to the authority of a father. But to be plain with you, the difference of our birth, fortune, and education, makes an honorable connection impossible; and I can never harbor a thought of bringing ruin upon one whose only fault was being too lovely. [*He takes her chin, tilts up her face, looks at it, then, almost choking, turns away*]. I can scarcely speak of it — it affects me. Farewell. [*With emotion, he exits rear C*].

MISS HARD. [*looking after him*] Generous man! I never knew half his merit till now. [*walks down C and speaks to audience*] He shall not go, if I have power or art to detain him. [*snaps her finger as she gets an idea; leans forward to audience with mischievous look*] I'll still preserve the character in which I stooped to conquer, but will undeceive my papa, who, perhaps, may laugh him out of his resolution. [*She runs off R, laughing*].

[TONY enters from rear C, strides down C, followed by CONSTANCE].

TONY. Ay, you may steal for yourselves the next time; I have done my duty. She has got the jewels again, that's a sure thing; but she believes it was all a mistake of the servants.

MISS N. [*following him pleadingly*] But, my dear cousin, sure you won't forsake us in this distress? If she in the least suspects that I am going off, I shall certainly be locked up, or sent to my Aunt Pedigree's, which is ten times worse.

TONY. But what can I do? I have got you a pair of horses that will fly like Whistlejacket, and I'm sure you can't say but I've courted you nicely before her face. Here she comes. [*MRS. HARDCASTLE is heard off stage. TONY turns and says disgustedly*] I suppose I must make love to you again. [*He grabs CONSTANCE by the arm and they go to the fireplace; MISS NEVILLE sits in chair up R of fireplace. TONY stands to the L of her, and pretends to stroke her hair, giving it a nasty jerk now and then*].

MRS. HARD. [*coming down to audience*] Well, I was greatly fluttered, to be sure. But my son tells me it was a mistake of the servants. I shan't be easy, however, till they are fairly married, and then let her keep her own fortune. [*CONSTANCE utters an "Oh!" as TONY pulls her hair. MRS. HARDCASTLE turns and sees them*]. But what do I see? Fondling together, as I'm alive! I never saw Tony so sprightly before. [*running across to them in delight*] Ah! have I caught you, my pretty doves! What, billing, exchanging stolen glances, and broken murmurs? Ah!

TONY. As for murmurs, mother, we grumble a little now and then, to be sure. But there's no love lost between us.

MISS N. [*rising*] Cousin Tony promises to give us more of his company at home. Indeed, he shan't leave us any more. [*Cooing, she playfully pinches his cheek, a bit roughly*]. It won't leave us, Cousin Tony, will it?

TONY. [*pinching her cheek*] Oh, it's a pretty creature. No, I'd sooner leave my horse in a pond, than leave you when you smile upon one so. Your laugh makes you so becoming. [*He makes a face*].

MISS N. Agreeable cousin! Who can help admiring that natural humor, that pleasant, broad, red, thoughtless — [*patting his cheek soundly*] — ah, it's a bold face.

MRS. HARD. Pretty innocence!

TONY. I'm sure I always loved Cousin Con's hazel eyes, and

her pretty long fingers. [*He pulls her fingers with pretended gentleness, ending with a jerk*].

MRS. HARD. Ah, he would charm the bird from the tree. I never was so happy before. The jewels, my dear Con, shall be yours incontinently. You shall have them. Isn't he a sweet boy, my dear? [*She chucks him under the chin, then claps her hands delightedly as she crosses to R of center*]. You shall be married to-morrow, and we'll put off the rest of his education.

[DIGGORY enters from rear C, marching stiffly like a soldier. He has an old broom for a musket. A letter is stuck in the end of the broom. He marches down C, makes a military turn, and marches down L, barking].

DIG. Where's the Squire? I have got a letter for your worship. [*He turns and whips the broom from his shoulder, presenting the end of it with the letter to TONY's face as if shooting him*].

TONY. Give it to my mamma. She reads all my letters first.

DIG. I had orders to deliver it into your own hands.

TONY. Who does it come from?

DIG. Your worship must ask that of the letter itself. [*guffaws, then straightens up, assumes military pose again, and barks out the order*] Right about face!

TONY. Double quick march! [*As DIGGORY crosses him to exit rear C, TONY kicks him*].

MISS N. [*who has risen and has looked at the letter over TONY's shoulder, utters a little cry*] Undone, undone! A letter to him from Hastings. I know the hand. If my aunt sees it, we are ruined forever. I'll keep her employed a little if I can. [*She runs across R to MRS. HARDCASTLE, laughing nervously*]. But I have not told you, madam, of my cousin's smart answer just now to Mr. Marlow. We so laughed. You must know, madam — [*She pulls MRS. HARDCASTLE down R so that her back is to TONY and converses with her in an undertone*] — this way a little, for he must not hear us.

TONY. [*turning the letter over and over, gazing at it stupidly*] A damned cramp piece of penmanship as ever I saw in my life. I can read your print hand very well. [*scratches his head mournfully*] But here there are such handles, and shanks, and dashes, that one can scarce tell the head from the tail. "To Anthony

Lumpkin, Esquire.” It’s very odd, I can read the outside of my letters, where my own name is, well enough. But when I come to open it, it’s all — buzz. That’s hard, very hard; for the inside of the letter is always the cream of the correspondence.

MRS. HARD. [*laughing*] Ha! ha! ha! Very well, very well. And so my son was too hard for the philosopher? [*She starts toward TONY, but CONSTANCE quickly catches her and hurries on*].

MISS N. Yes, madam; but you must hear the rest, madam. [*pulls her farther down R*] A little more this way, or he may hear us. You’ll hear how he puzzled him again.

MRS. HARD. [*looking suspiciously over her shoulder at TONY*] He seems strangely puzzled now himself, methinks.

TONY. [*turning the letter upside down and around, still scratching his head*] A dratted up-and-down hand. [*reading*] Dear Sir — Then there’s an M, and a T, and an S, but whether the next fellow be an izzard or an R, confound me, if I can tell.

MRS. HARD. [*coming forward*] What’s that, my dear? Can I give you any assistance?

MISS N. [*following, getting between MRS. HARDCASTLE and TONY*] Pray, aunt, let me read it. Nobody reads a cramp hand better than I. [*grabbing the letter from him*] Do you know who it is from?

TONY. Can’t tell, except from Dick Ginger, the feeder.

MISS N. Ay, so it is. [*pretending to read*] “Dear Squire, Hoping that you’re in health, as I am at this present. The gentlemen of the Shake-bag club has cut the gentlemen of the Goose-green quite out of feather. The odds — [*she stumbles on*] — um — odd battle — um — long fighting — um.” Here, here, it’s all about cocks and fighting; it’s of no consequence — [*thrusting the letter at him and crossing down L*] here, put it up, put it up.

TONY. But I tell you, miss, it’s of all the consequence in the world. I would not lose the rest of it for a guinea. Here, mother, do you make it out? [*hands the letter to MRS. HARDCASTLE, turning to CONSTANCE in disgust*] Of no consequence! [*CONSTANCE gives him a violent kick and a murderous look*].

MRS. HARD. [*reading*] “Dear Squire, I am now waiting for Miss Neville, with a post-chaise, at the bottom of the garden,

but I find my horses yet unable to perform the journey. I expect you'll assist us with a pair of fresh horses, as you promised. Despatch is necessary, as the hag" —

TONY. [*guffawing, pointing to her*] That's you!

MRS. HARD. [*raising her hand to strike TONY, who ducks. She goes on reading*] "your mother, will otherwise suspect us. Yours, Hastings." [*crumpling the letter, uttering a cry of rage*] Grant me patience! I shall run distracted! My rage chokes me!

MISS N. I hope, madam, you'll suspend your resentment for a few moments, and not impute to me any impertinence, or sinister design that belongs to another.

MRS. HARD. [*curtseying low, says, coldly sarcastic*] Fine spoken, madam; you are most miraculously polite and engaging, and quite the very pink of courtesy and circumspection, madam! [*Changing her tone, she advances on TONY, who runs behind chair down L. CONSTANCE runs across to R as MRS. HARDCASTLE chases TONY around the chair, yelling at him in rage*]. And you, you great ill-fashioned oaf, with scarce sense enough to keep your mouth shut, were you, too, joined against me? But I'll defeat all your plots in a moment. [*crossing to CONSTANCE*] As for you, madam, since you have a pair of fresh horses ready, it would be cruel to disappoint them. So, if you please, instead of running away with your spark, prepare, this very moment, to run off with me. [*shaking her by the shoulder*] Your old Aunt Pedigree will keep you secure, I'll warrant me. [*turning to TONY*] You, too, sir, may mount your horse, and guard us upon the way. [*goes to door rear C*] Here, Thomas, Roger, Diggory! [*turning on them*] I'll show you that I wish you better than you do yourselves. [*She exits*].

MISS N. [*dropping in chair L of table*] So now I'm completely ruined.

TONY. Ay, that's a sure thing.

MISS N. What better could be expected from being connected with such a stupid fool, and after all the nods and signs I made him!

TONY. [*crosses to her*] By the laws, miss, it was your own cleverness, and not my stupidity, that did your business. You were so nice and so busy with your Shake-bags and Goose-greens, that I thought you could never be making believe.

HAST. [*entering hurriedly from rear C*] So, sir, I find by my servant, that you have shown my letter and betrayed us. Was this well done, young gentleman?

TONY. Here's another. Ask miss there who betrayed you. Ecod, it was her doing, not mine.

MAR. [*appearing in door rear C*] So, I have been finely used here among you. Rendered contemptible, driven into ill-manners, despised, insulted, laughed at.

TONY. [*sighing, looks at MARLOW and walks down LC as he speaks over his shoulder*] Here's another. We shall have old Bedlam broke loose presently.

MISS N. [*rises, points to TONY*] And there, sir, is the gentleman to whom we owe every obligation.

MAR. [*crossing L to TONY and turning him around*] What can I say to him? A mere booby, an idiot, whose ignorance and age are a protection.

HAST. [*also crossing to TONY, who retreats a step. During the following lines they advance on TONY, who retreats down L step by step*] A poor, contemptible booby, that would but disgrace correction.

MISS N. Yet with cunning and malice enough to make himself merry with all our embarrassments.

HAST. An insensible cub!

MAR. Replete with tricks and mischief.

TONY. [*stopping his retreat and drawing himself up*] Baw! damme, but I'll fight you both, one after the other [*He spars, then as they take a menacing step toward him he drops his hands and adds meekly*] — with baskets.

MAR. [*leaving TONY alone and turning on HASTINGS*] As for him, he's below resentment. But your conduct, Mr. Hastings, requires an explanation. You knew of my mistakes, yet would not undeceive me.

HAST. Tortured as I am with my own disappointments, is this a time for explanations? It is not friendly, Mr. Marlow.

MAR. But, sir —

MISS N. Mr. Marlow, we never kept on your mistake, till it was too late to undeceive you. Be pacified.

MRS. HARD. [*off rear C*] Miss Neville, Constance — why, Constance, I say.

MISS N. [*calling*] I'm coming! [*to MARLOW*] Oh, Mr. Marlow! If you knew what a scene of constraint and ill-nature lies before me, I'm sure it would convert your resentment into pity.

MAR. I'm so distracted with a variety of passions that I don't know what I do. Forgive me, madam. [*turns to HASTINGS*] Forgive me, George. You know my hasty temper.

HAST. [*pats MARLOW's shoulder, then turns, looking at CONSTANCE sadly*] The torture of my situation is my only excuse.

MISS N. [*putting her hand on his arm*] If you have that esteem for me that I think you have, your constancy for three years will but increase the happiness of our future connection.

MRS. HARD. [*off stage*] Constance, Constance, I say.

MISS N. [*calling*] I'm coming. [*She starts to go. HASTINGS kisses her hand*]. Constancy, remember, [*she speaks softly, almost in tears*] constancy is the word. [*She exits rear C*].

HAST. [*turning away, bowing his head*] My heart! How can I support this! To be so near such happiness!

MAR. [*crossing to TONY*] You see now, young gentleman, the effects of your folly. What might be amusement to you, is here disappointment, and even distress.

TONY. [*who has been sitting glumly in chair down L, suddenly bangs his fist on the arm of the chair and leaps to his feet*] Ecod! I have hit it. It's here! [*coming and drawing them together stands between them, an arm around their shoulders*] Meet me two hours hence at the bottom of the garden; and if you don't find Tony Lumpkin a more good-natured fellow than you thought for, I'll give you leave to take my best horse, and Bet Bouncer into the bargain. Come along. [*pulls them off rear C singing*]

“For we are three jolly good fellows
Which nobody can deny.
Which nobody can deny.”

CURTAIN

ACT III — SCENE I

The garden of the Hardcastle mansion. There is a garden bench center, a clump of trees up R and L, and a row of bushes along the back and side. There is an entrance to the garden through clumps of bushes down R and L. A gate may be placed at the entrance down L.

HARDCASTLE and SIR CHARLES enter from R.

SIR CHARLES. So, Dick, my son mistook you for an inn-keeper, ha, ha, ha!

HARD. Yes, but no matter, my dear friend; this union of our families will make our personal friendships hereditary; and though my daughter's fortune is small —

SIR CHARLES. Why, Dick, will you talk fortune to me? If they like each other, as you say they do —

HARD. *If, man!* I tell you they do like each other. I saw him grasp her hand in the warmest manner myself; [*looking off R*] and here he comes to put you out of your ifs. [MARLOW enters from R, crosses and bows to HARDCASTLE].

MAR. I come, sir, once more, to ask pardon for my strange conduct.

HARD. Tut, boy; a trifle. You take it too gravely. An hour or two's laughing with my daughter will set all to rights again. [*shyly nudging him*] She'll never like you the worse for it.

MAR. Sir, I shall always be proud of her approbation.

HARD. Approbation is but a cold word, Mr. Marlow; [*punching him playfully*] you have something more than approbation thereabouts. [*punching him again*] You take me?

MAR. Sure, sir, nothing has passed between us but the most profound respect on my side, and the most distant reserve on hers.

HARD. Well, well, I like modesty in its place well enough. But this is over-acting, young gentleman.

MAR. By all that is just and true, I never gave Miss Hardcastle the slightest mark of my attachment. We had but one interview, and that was formal, modest, and uninteresting.

HARD. [*aside*] This fellow's impudence is beyond bearing!

SIR CHARLES. And you never grasped her hand, or made any protestations?

MAR. As heaven is my witness, I saw the lady without emotion, and parted without reluctance.

HARD. [*expostulating*] Well!

MAR. [*coldly*] I hope you'll exact no further proofs, nor prevent me from leaving a house in which I have suffered so many mortifications. [*He draws himself up and exits down R*].

SIR CHARLES. [*looking after him*] I'm astonished at his air of sincerity.

HARD. [*indignantly*] And I'm astonished at the deliberate — [*looking off L*] but here comes my daughter, and I would stake my happiness on her veracity. [*KATE enters from down L*]. Kate, come hither, child. [*as KATE crosses to them*] Answer us sincerely, and without reserve; has Mr. Marlow made you any professions of love and affection?

MISS HARD. [*curtseying demurely*] The question is abrupt, sir. But since you require unreserved sincerity — I think he has.

HARD. [*turning triumphantly to SIR CHARLES*] You see!

SIR CHARLES. And pray, madam, have you and my son had more than one interview?

MISS HARD. Yes, sir, several.

HARD. [*more triumphantly*] You see!

SIR CHARLES. Did he talk of love?

MISS HARD. Much, sir.

HARD. Now, my friend, I hope you are satisfied.

SIR CHARLES. [*sadly*] If I find him as you describe, all my happiness in him must find an end.

MISS HARD. And if you don't find him what I describe — I fear my happiness must never have a beginning. But, come, someone approaches. [*looks off R*] Come into the house. I'll reveal more of your son's professed passion for me. [*They exit L*].

[*HASTINGS enters from R, pacing nervously back and forth*].

HAST. What an idiot am I to wait here for a fellow who probably takes a delight in mortifying me. He never intended to be punctual, and I'll wait no longer. [*looks off R*] What do I see? It is he, and perhaps with news of my Constance!

[as TONY enters, muddy and spattered] My honest Squire! I now find you a man of your word. This looks like friendship.

TONY. [*sprawling on the bench*] Ay, I'm your friend, and the best friend you have in the world, if you knew but all. This riding by night, by-the-by, is cursedly tiresome. It has shook me worse than the basket of a stagecoach.

HAST. [*impatiently*] Well, but where have you left the ladies? I die with impatience.

TONY. Left them? Why, where should I leave them, but where I found them?

HAST. This is a riddle.

TONY. Riddle me this, then. What's that goes round the house, and round the house, and never touches the house?

HAST. I'm still astray.

TONY. [*rising and clapping him on the back*] Why, that's it! I have led them astray. By jingo, there's not a pond or slough within five miles of the place but they can tell the taste of. [*Doubling up with laughter, he crosses to L*].

HAST. [*light slowly dawning*] Ha! ha! ha! I understand; you took them in a round, while they supposed themselves going forward. And so you have at last brought them home again.

TONY. You shall hear. [*He tells the story between fits of laughter*]. I first took them down Feather-bed-lane, where we stuck fast in the mud. I then rattled them crack over the stones of Up-and-down Hill — I then introduced them to the gibbet on Crackskull Common, and from that, with a circumbendibus, I fairly lodged them in the horse-pond at the bottom of the garden. [*He whoops with laughter*].

HAST. But no accident, I hope?

TONY. No, no; only mother is confoundedly frightened. She thinks herself forty miles off. She's sick of the journey, and the horses can scarce crawl. So if your own horses be ready, you may whip off with Cousin, and I'll be bound that no soul here can budge an inch to follow you.

HAST. [*crosses and takes his hand*] My dear friend, how can I be grateful?

TONY. [*dropping his hand and pouting like a big baby*] Ay, now it's "dear friend," "noble Squire." Just now, it was all "idiot," "cub," and "run me through the gizzard."

HAST. [*patting his shoulder. TONY grins*] The rebuke is just. But I must hasten to relieve Miss Neville; if you keep the old lady employed, I promise to take care of the young one.

TONY. Never fear me. Here she comes. Vanish. [HASTINGS starts to exit R when MRS. HARDCASTLE is heard wailing off stage. He steps quickly behind a tree until after she has rushed in from R, then exits quickly off R]. She's got from the pond, and draggled up to the waist like a mermaid.

[MRS. HARDCASTLE rushes on, wailing. She is a sorry sight. Her dress is bedraggled and mud-splattered. Her hat is awry. She almost staggers].

MRS. HARD. O Tony, I'm killed! Shook, battered to death! I shall never survive it! [*almost collapsing on him*] That last jolt has done my business.

TONY. Alack, mamma, it was all your own fault. You would be for running away by night, without knowing one inch of the way. [*He straightens her up*].

MRS. HARD. I wish we were at home again. I never met so many accidents in so short a journey. Drenched in the mud, overturned in a ditch, stuck fast in a slough, jolted to a jelly, and at last to lose our way! [*looks fearfully about her*] Whereabouts do you think we are, Tony?

TONY. [*pretending to gaze into the distance*] By my guess we should be upon Heavytree Heath, about forty miles from home.

MRS. HARD. Oh, lud! Oh, lud! [*collapsing on him again*] the most notorious spot in all the country. We only want a robbery to make a complete night on't.

TONY. Don't be afraid, mamma, don't be afraid. [*straightens her up again*] Two of the five that kept here are hanged, and the other three may not find us. Don't be afraid. [*He points trembling off L*]. Is that a man that's galloping behind us? No; it's only a tree. Don't be afraid.

MRS. HARD. [*her teeth chattering with fright*] The fright will certainly kill me.

TONY. [*suddenly pointing off R*] Do you see anything like a black hat moving behind the thicket?

MRS. HARD. [*hanging onto him in fright*] Oh, death!

TONY. No; it's only a cow. Don't be afraid, mother, don't be afraid.

MRS. HARD. [*quaveringly, points with trembling hand off L*] As I'm alive, Tony, I see a man coming towards us. Ah! I'm sure on't. If he perceives us, we are undone.

TONY. [*aside*] Father-in-law, by all that's unlucky, come to take one of his night walks! [*turns to her, speaking in a frightened voice*] Ah, it's a highwayman, with pistols as long as my leg. An ill-looking fellow.

MRS. HARD. [*almost screaming*] Good Heaven defend us! He approaches!

TONY. Do you hide yourself in that thicket, and leave me to manage him. [*pushes her behind tree down R*] If there be any danger, I'll cough and cry "hem." When I cough, be sure to keep close.

HARD. [*entering from L*] I'm mistaken, or I heard voices of people in want of help. Oh, Tony, is that you? I did not expect you so soon back. Are your mother and her charge in safety?

TONY. [*crosses to meet him*] Very safe, sir, at my Aunt Pedigree's. Hem.

MRS. HARD. [*peers out from behind the tree, but does not recognize HARDCASTLE*] Ah, death! I find there's danger.

HARD. Forty miles in three hours! Sure that's too much, my youngster.

TONY. Stout horses and willing minds make short journeys, as they say. Hem!

MRS. HARD. [*from behind*] Sure he'll do the dear boy no harm!

HARD. [*looks toward the tree where MRS. HARDCASTLE is hiding*] But I heard a voice here; I should be glad to know from whence it came.

TONY. It was I, sir, talking to myself, sir. I was saying that forty miles in three hours was very good going. Hem! As to be sure it was. Hem! [*looking over his shoulder and coughing loudly*] Hem! I have got a sort of cold by being out in the air. We'll go in, if you please. Hem. [*He crosses to down L, trying to pull HARDCASTLE with him*].

HARD. [*holding back*] But if you talked to yourself, you did not answer yourself. I am certain I heard two voices, and [*raises his voice*] am resolved to find the other out.

MRS. HARD. [*running forward from behind*] Oh, lud, he'll murder my poor boy, my darling! Here, good gentleman, whet your rage upon me. Take my money, my life, but spare that young gentleman; spare my child, if you have any mercy!

HARD. [*to the audience*] My wife, as I'm a Christian! From whence can she come, and what does she mean?

MRS. HARD. [*kneeling and throwing her arms about his legs*] Take compassion on us, good Mr. Highwayman! Take our money, our watches, all we have, but spare our lives. We will never bring you to justice, indeed we won't, good Mr. Highwayman!

HARD. I believe the woman's out of her senses. [*raising her up*] What, Dorothy, don't you know me? Your own doodly de dumpty.

MRS. HARD. [*peering into his face, then stepping back*] Mr. Hardcastle, as I'm alive! My fears blinded me. But who, my dear, could have expected to meet you here, in this frightful place, so far from home? What has brought you to follow us?

HARD. Sure, Dorothy, you have not lost your wits? So far from home, when you are within forty yards of your own door? [*points off L, sees TONY standing down L chewing his fingers, marches over to him*] This is one of your old tricks, you graceless rogue, you. [*returning to MRS. HARDCASTLE, pointing about the garden*] Don't you know the gate and the mulberry tree — and don't you remember the horse-pond, my dear?

MRS. HARD. [*grimly*] Yes, I shall remember the horse-pond as long as I live; I have caught my death in it. [*marching angrily over to TONY*] And is it to you, you graceless varlet, I owe all this? I'll teach you to abuse your mother, I will. [*beats him about the shoulders*]

TONY. [*warding off her blows*] Ecod, mother, all the parish says you have spoiled me, and so you may take the fruits on't. [*He runs off L, she after him, yelling and beating him*].

MRS. HARD. I'll spoil you, I will.

CURTAIN

ACT III — SCENE 2

The parlor of the Hardcastle mansion. SIR CHARLES and KATE HARDCASTLE enter from rear C.

SIR CHARLES. What a situation am I in! If what you say appears, I shall then find a guilty son. If what he says be true, [*takes her hand and pats it gently*] I shall then lose one that, of all others, I most wished for a daughter.

MISS HARD. I am proud of your approbation, and to show I merit it, if you will conceal yourselves behind that door [*points rear C*] you shall hear his explicit declaration. [*looks off R*] But he comes.

SIR CHARLES. I'll to your father, and keep him to the appointment. [*He exits hurriedly rear C*].

MAR. [*entering from down R, crosses to KATE*] Though prepared for setting out, I come once more to take leave; nor did I, till this moment, know the pain I feel in the separation.

MISS HARD. [*smiling*] I believe these sufferings cannot be very great, sir, which you can so easily remove. A day or two longer, perhaps, might lessen your uneasiness, by showing the little value of what you now think proper to regret.

MAR. [*aside*] This girl every moment improves upon me. [*aloud*] It must not be, madam. I have already trifled too long with my heart.

MISS HARD. [*turns away sadly*] Then go, sir. I'll urge nothing more to detain you. Though my family be as good as hers you came down to visit, and my education, I hope, not inferior, what are these advantages without equal affluence? I must remain contented with the slight approbation of imputed merit; [*pretends to weep*] I must have only the mockery of your addresses, while all your serious aims are fixed on fortune. [*The heads of SIR CHARLES and HARDCASTLE appear peeking out on either side of the door rear C*].

MAR. By Heavens, madam, fortune was ever my smallest consideration. Your beauty at first caught my eye; for who could see that without emotion? [*seizing her hands*] But every moment that I converse with you, steals in some new grace, heightens the picture, and gives it stronger expression. What

at first seemed rustic plainness, now appears refined simplicity. What seemed forward assurance, now strikes me as the result of courageous innocence and conscious virtue. [*pauses, then straightens up nobly*] I am now determined to stay, madam, and I have too good an opinion of my father's discernment, when he sees you, to doubt his approbation.

SIR CHARLES. [*in a loud whisper*] What can he mean?

HARD. I told you. Hush!

MISS HARD. No, Mr. Marlow; [*withdrawing her hands and turning away sadly*] I will not, cannot detain you. Do you think I could suffer a connection in which there is the smallest room for repentance? Do you think I could ever relish that happiness which was acquired by lessening yours? Do you think I could ever catch at the confident addresses of a secure admirer?

MAR. [*kneeling*] Does this look like security? Does this look like confidence? No, madam, every moment that shows me your merit, only serves to increase my diffidence and confusion. Here let me continue —

SIR CHARLES. [*coming out and down to R of MARLOW*] I can hold it no longer. Charles, Charles, how hast thou deceived me!

HARD. [*emerging, coming down to L of KATE*] What have you to say now?

MAR. [*rising, looking at them*] That I'm all amazement! What can it mean?

HARD. [*angrily*] It means that you can say and unsay things at pleasure; that you can address a lady in private, and deny it in public; that you have one story for us, and another for my daughter.

MAR. Daughter! [*points weakly to KATE*] — this lady your daughter!

HARD. Yes, sir, my only daughter. [*sarcastically*] She isn't yours, is she? My Kate; whose else should she be?

MAR. [*aside*] Oh, the devil!

MISS HARD. Yes, sir, that very identical tall, squinting lady you were pleased to take me for. [*curtseying*] She that you addressed as the mild, modest, sentimental man of gravity, and the bold, forward, agreeable Rattle of the Ladies' Club; [*laughs merrily*] ha! ha! ha!

MAR. Zounds! [*agitatedly crosses down L*] There's no bearing this; it's worse than death.

MISS HARD. In which of your characters, sir, will you give us leave to address you? As the faltering gentleman, with looks on the ground, that speaks just to be heard, and hates hypocrisy; or the loud, confident creature that keeps it up with Mrs. Mantrap and old Mrs. Biddy Buckskin till three in the morning; ha! ha! ha!

MAR. Oh, curses on my noisy head! I never attempted to be impudent yet that I was not taken down. [*starts to cross to R*] I must be gone.

HARD. [*stepping in front of him*] By the hand of my body, but you shall not. I see it was all a mistake, and I am rejoiced to find it. You shall not, sir, I tell you. I know she'll forgive you. [*turning to KATE*] Won't you forgive him, Kate? We'll all forgive him. Take courage, man! [*He takes KATE's hand, puts it in MARLOW's. They cross to down L together as HARDCASTLE claps SIR CHARLES on the back and draws him up R, both of them chuckling*].

MRS. HARD. [*entering rear C, followed by a sulking TONY*] So, so, they're gone off. Let them go, I care not.

HARD. [*down R, turning*] Who gone?

MRS. HARD. My dutiful niece and her gentleman, Mr. Hastings, from town. He who came with our modest visitor here. [*She points L to MARLOW*].

SIR CHARLES. Who, my honest George Hastings? As worthy a fellow as lives, and the girl could not have made a more prudent choice.

MRS. HARD. [*in amazement*] What? [*as HASTINGS and CONSTANCE enter timidly rear C*] What, returned so soon? [*aside*] I begin not to like it.

HAST. [*leading MISS NEVILLE to HARDCASTLE*] For my late attempt to fly off with your niece, let my present confusion be my punishment. We are now come back to appeal from your justice to your humanity. By her father's consent, I first paid her my addresses, and our passions were first founded on duty.

HARD. I'm glad they are come back to reclaim their due. Come hither, Tony, boy. [*TONY obeys sullenly. Their positions*

are now: SIR CHARLES, extreme down R; HARDCASTLE, RC; CONSTANCE and HASTINGS, center; TONY, a little LC; MRS. HARDCASTLE, LC; and KATE and MARLOW, down L]. Do you refuse this lady's hand whom I now offer you? [He takes CONSTANCE's hand].

TONY. What signifies my refusing? You know I can't refuse her till I'm of age, father.

HARD. [*crossing CONSTANCE and HASTINGS to stand a little LC, beside TONY, putting his hand on his shoulder*] While I thought concealing your age, boy, was likely to conduce to your improvement, I concurred with your mother's desire to keep it secret; but since I find she turns it to a wrong use, I must now declare you have been of age these three months.

TONY. What! Have I come to years of discretion, father?

HARD. No, I didn't say that; but you are now your own master.

TONY. Of age! [*gleefully*] Am I of age, father?

HARD. Above three months.

TONY. [*marching in front of HASTINGS; stands at left of CONSTANCE, grabs her hand*] Then you'll see the first use I'll make of my liberty. Witness all men by these presents, that I, Anthony Lumpkin, Esquire, of Blank-place, refuse you, Constantia Neville, spinster, of no place at all, for my true and lawful wife. So Constantia Neville may go the devil, [*throws her hand down*] marry whom she pleases, [*hands her over to HASTINGS*] and Tony Lumpkin is his own man again! [*crossing to MRS. HARDCASTLE, says coaxingly*] Now, mother, I've got one word to say.

MRS. HARD. What is it, my lovey?

TONY. [*in a loud, coarse voice*] Horse-pond! [*He runs off rear C, guffawing loudly; MRS. HARDCASTLE screams angrily and runs after him. HASTINGS and CONSTANCE, MARLOW and KATE embrace as the curtain falls*].

*Curtain rises again immediately
for delivery of the*

EPILOGUE

Epilogue

[MISS HARDCASTLE *appears before the curtain, smiling and curtseying.*]

Thus having stooped to conquer with success,
And gained a husband without aid of dress,

[*indicates maid's dress*]

Still as a barmaid I could wish it too

As I have conquered him to conquer — you.

[*She curtseys, disappears through the curtain.*]

THE END

APPENDIX

Stage Language

Bibliography

Title -

Author

Accession No.

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Stage Language

Acting area. A specific area within the acting space in which certain action or scenes take place.

Acting space. The part of the stage enclosed by scenery where the actors perform.

At rise. The beginning of the play or act.

Backing. Scenery used behind openings — windows, doors, etc., of the setting — to limit the view of the audience.

Backstage. The part of the stage behind the scenery not visible to the audience.

Batten. A length of wood or iron from which a drop, cyclorama, or other scenery is suspended.

Blocking. An arrangement of the action of a play.

Blocking. One actor standing in front of another, obstructing the view of the audience.

Border. An abbreviated drop or short piece of scenery hung across the top of the stage to mask overhead lights or scenery. Several borders, spaced from front to back of the stage, often serve as a ceiling.

Border lights. Strips or sections of lights hung overhead across the stage.

Business. Any action essential or appropriate to lines or characters.

C or Center. The center of the acting space on the stage.

Cross. Any movement on the stage to change the actor's location.

Cue. The last words or action preceding any lines or business.

Curtain. A call used to designate the lowering or raising of the front curtain.

Cyclorama. A curtain or drapery enclosing the acting space, that is, enclosing three sides of the stage.

Down or Downstage. That part of the stage nearest the audience. Designated by *D*.

Drop. A large sheet of canvas or curtain, plain or painted to represent various scenes or background.

Flat. A unit or section of upright scenery. A wooden frame covered with canvas or heavy cloth.

- Floodlights.* Large single lights enclosed in a metal box or hood. For lighting broad surfaces.
- Footlights.* A strip or strips of lights in a trough at the front of the stage.
- Gelatin frame.* A metal or wooden slide into which colored gelatin is inserted and slipped into a groove on the front of the lighting instrument.
- Groundrow.* A low, cut-out piece of scenery usually painted to represent bushes, rocks, distant hills, etc.
- House.* The part of the auditorium or theater in which the audience sits.
- Jack.* A triangle of wood pieces hinged to the back of a piece of scenery and screwed to the floor to brace the piece.
- Lash eye.* A metal screw or ring through which the lash line is knotted and fastened.
- Lash cleat.* A metal projection on the inside stiles of flats around which the lash line is hooked.
- Lash line.* The cord or narrow rope used to fasten pieces of scenery together.
- Left.* Any area to the actor's left of center stage as he faces the audience. Designated by *L*.
- Light plot.* A record of all arrangements and changes in the lighting for a play. Contains the cues for the electrician.
- Mask.* To conceal or cut off from view any part of the backstage from view of the audience.
- Off or Off stage.* The portions of the stage not visible to the audience.
- On.* Occupying the acting space, within view of the audience.
- Places.* The positions of the actors at the opening of an act or scene.
- Pointing.* Emphasizing a word or group of words containing the core of meaning of a line or speech.
- Properties.* All of the stage fittings, including furniture, draperies, pictures, ornaments, etc.
- Proscenium.* The opening through which the audience views the play.
- Set or setting.* The scenery for an act or scene.
- Set pieces.* Individual units or pieces of scenery. Usually set against a cyclorama.
- Sight lines.* The lines of vision of the audience to all corners of the acting space.
- Sky drop.* A sheet of canvas or cloth hung smooth, usually weighted at the bottom, lighted or painted to represent the sky.
- Spotlights.* High wattage lamps in a metal box with a focusing lens.
- Stage brace.* An adjustable length of wood used to brace scenery.

Stage screw. A large screw with a handle which fastens the brace to the floor.

Stile. The outside piece on each side of a flat frame.

Strike. To take down and remove scenery from the acting space.

Stringer. Another term for groundrow — not to be confused with supporting strips for step units.

Strip lights. Open metal troughs with a row of lamps. Best when in a number of circuits, often in more than one color.

Tie off. The knot used to tie the lash line securely after the flats have been lashed together.

Toggle. The middle rail of a flat frame.

Up or Upstage. The portion of the stage farthest from the audience.

Wings. The off-stage places to the right or left of the acting space.

Supply Companies

COSTUME COMPANIES

William Beck and Sons, 2102 Highland Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio
 Brooks Costume Rental, 1437 Broadway, New York City
 Colorado Costume Co., 1751 Champa St., Denver, Colorado
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 Arvid Crandall, Goodman Theater, Chicago, Illinois
 Capitol Stage Lighting Co., 626 Tenth Ave., New York City
 Channon Corporation (stage hardware), 1447 W. Austin Ave., Chicago, Illinois
 J. R. Clancy (stage hardware), Syracuse, New York
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Good for patterns, fabric suggestions, etc., for all period costumes. Good bibliography for manners and customs of periods.
- YOUNG, AGNES B. *Stage Costuming*. Macmillan.
A practical book on how to make costumes for the stage.

DIRECTING

- BROWN, GILMOR, and GARWOOD, ALICE. *General Principles of Play Direction*. Samuel French.
A well-written explanation of the fundamental problems of play directing.
- DOLMAN, JOHN, JR. *The Art of Play Production*. Harpers.
Sound advice in directing based on aesthetic principles.
- HEFFNER, HUBERT C., SELDEN, SAMUEL, and SELLMAN, HUNTON D. *Modern Theatre Practice*. Crofts.
A thoroughly modern work containing invaluable information on the theory and procedures of direction.
- HOPKINS, ARTHUR. *How's Your Second Act?* Samuel French.
Good notes on directing and the art of production.
- SMITH, MILTON. *Book of Play Production*. D. Appleton-Century.
A good elementary book on stagecraft and directing. Practical and well illustrated.

LIGHTING

- FUCHS, THEODORE. *Stage Lighting*. Little, Brown.
An exhaustive study of all phases of the subject. The section on home-built equipment is very useful. Not the latest word but very comprehensive.

KNAPP, JACK S. *Lighting the Stage with Home-Made Equipment.* Walter H. Baker.

A practical manual showing exactly how to make inexpensive lighting equipment. Helpful illustrations.

MCCANDLESS, STANLEY. *A Method of Lighting the Stage.* Theatre Arts. Splendid, detailed information.

SELDEN, SAMUEL, and SELLMAN, HUNTON D. *Stage Scenery and Lighting.* Crofts.

Helpful and understandable to the amateur.

MAKE-UP

BAIRD, JOHN F. *Make-up.* Samuel French.

A modern treatise on make-up with many practical charts and tables.

CHALMERS, HELENA. *The Art of Make-up.* D. Appleton-Century.

A practical book for amateurs.

STRAUSS, IVARD. *Paint, Powder, and Make-up.* Sweet and Son.

A thorough and complete work containing over a hundred photographs and drawings.

HINTS ON THE ART OF MAKE-UP. Max Factor.

Well-illustrated series of booklets on the techniques of make-up. Several are devoted to Shakespearian characters. They may be obtained for the asking.

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